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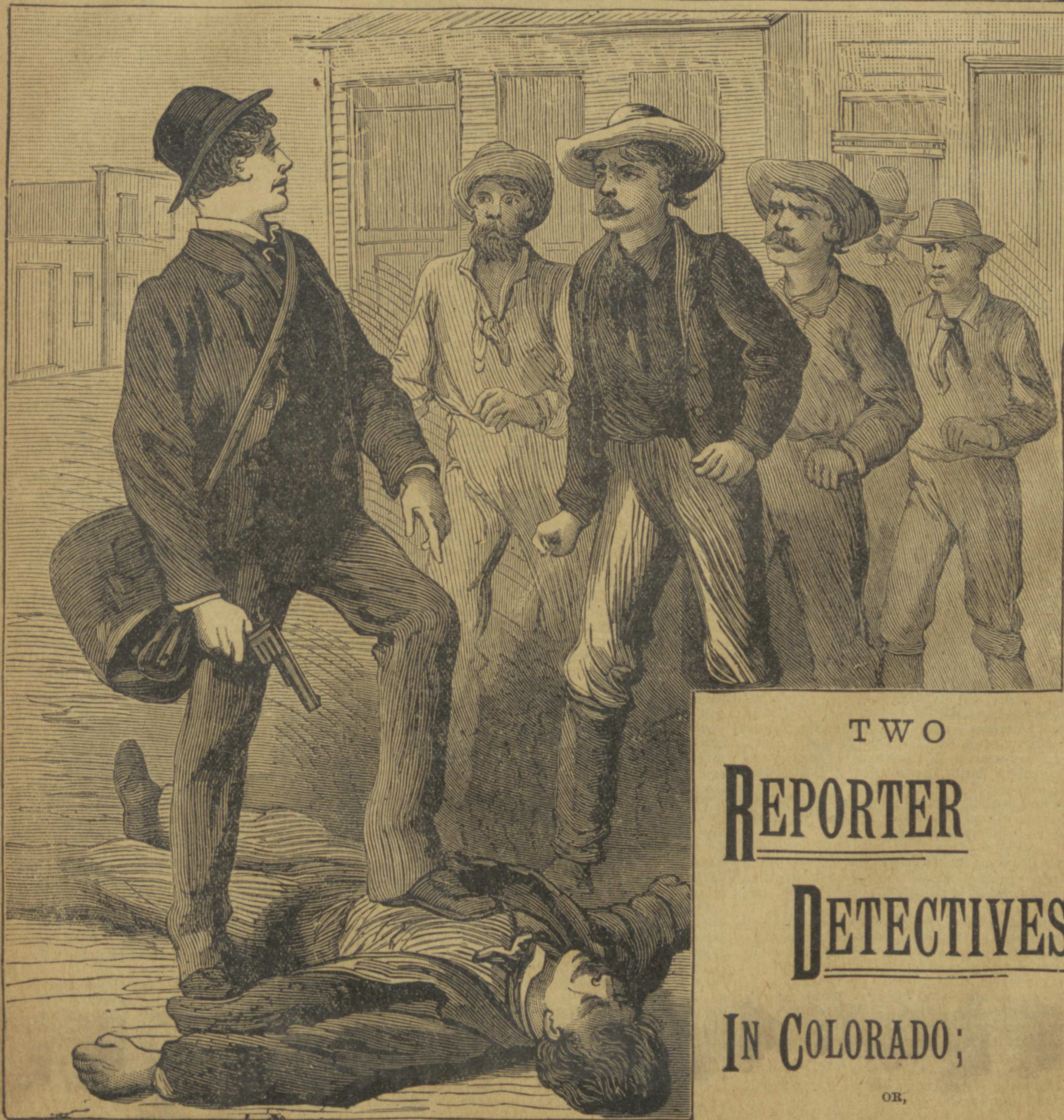
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TWO REPORTER DETECTIVES! IN COLORADO;

OR,

Buckskin Bob's Snap-Shot.

"HERE, TAKE YOUR TURN," SAID DETECTIVE DICK. "SET ON HIM UNTIL HE
APOLOGIZES, IF IT TAKES ALL NIGHT."

Two Reporter Detectives in Colorado:

OR,

Buckskin Bob's Snap-Shot.

A Romance of Colorado.

BY HOWARD M. BOYNTON,
AUTHOR OF "DETECTIVE GERMAN JOE," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE REPORTERS EN ROUTE.

In the parlor-car of a train speeding westward over the Grand Trunk Railroad sat two young men, busily engaged in translating a cipher telegraphic dispatch. The elder looking over his companion's shoulder, offered occasional suggestions, and when the translation was complete, read it aloud:

"NEW YORK, March 2, 1889.

"RICHARD A. VINTON,

Grand Trunk Depot, Hamilton:—

"Latest advices here indicate that Theiss has adopted a roundabout course of reaching Colorado. Our correspondent at Indianapolis, whom you had better see, is certain that the man stopped over there yesterday, but thinks he left the Chicago train there and went north to Detroit, as if to throw any possible pursuer off the trail. So I advise a brief tarry in Detroit, long enough to make sure that he is not there, or to discover, if possible, if he has been there, what mission he had in Detroit. After that investigation, one of you must go to Indianapolis to confer with our correspondent there, while the other had better proceed directly to the Colorado mining town. It is my idea that Theiss will press right on to that town, for I think the big sum of money he stole from the bank was for the purpose of furthering some scheme he has entered into there. I trust the important case in your hands, knowing that as reporter-detectives you will try and do yourselves and your chief 'proud' in working up this interesting case.

"JOHN P. STRANAHAN,
Managing Editor Gazette."

"Well, Bert," said the young man to whom this dispatch was addressed, "we'll have to drop off at Detroit and investigate there, then one must go on direct to Colorado. Which one shall it be?"

"It makes no difference to me," replied the other, carefully adjusting a single-barreled glass in his left eye, and glancing out of the window. "I can't say, though, that I'd take great pleasure in going out to one of those uncivilized mining-camps. If you'd just as soon go to Colorado, I'll try to hunt up the cashier."

"All right, that would suit me very well. It's lucky neither of us has any baggage to bother with."

"Lucky! I should think it was just the reverse. I'm a nice-looking chromo, I am, to follow a man into the wilds of Colorado. That's the only drawback to the newspaper business; one can never tell at what hour or under what circumstances he will be put on detective duty. When Stranahan sent for me this morning I was preparing to start for Jacksonville—and here I am on my way to Kalamahoo or some other God-forsaken land, dressed for a fashionable watering-place."

His companion glanced at the speaker's long cape-coat, kid gloves, cane and patent-leather shoes, and then said, laughingly:

"You are one of the biggest dudes in the State. Why don't you get rid of those English—Hello, here we are at Detroit!" for at that moment the train-conductor called out: "Detroit! Detroit!"

Both young men gathered up their "traps" and soon were at the hotel near the grand station, where, registering, they were assigned a room and proceeded to it to canvass matters and lay out their whole programme of operations.

Of course, in their outfit were pipes, the inevitable reportorial adjunct, and soon the two young man-hunters were ready for business. Vinton with his reed meerschbaum and the other with his fragrant Havana.

"Now, I say Dick, this is nice!" averred his reporter-pard. "Running down a rogue in this way isn't breakneck work is it?"

"Well, if I don't miss my guess it will be breakneck work before we get through with it,"

returned the other, heels up against the mantel and evidently in a meditative mood. "I have no idea the wanted man is in this town, nor in Indianapolis, nor in Chicago, but that he has made a clean run for the Wild and Woolly West where to change his name and identity and strike out as another man than Theiss the Crook Cashier."

Dick Vinton, the speaker, was a good-looking young fellow, about twenty-five years old, plainly but neatly dressed, and evidently something of an athlete, as his broad shoulders and manly bearing would seem to indicate.

His companion was his direct opposite in personal appearance, being extremely tall and thin, and dressed in the latest style and cut of English clothes.

Dick was employed as a reporter on the New York Daily Gazette, and the latter, Bert Carmly, better known among his acquaintances as Lord Carmly, traveled in the interests of the London Press.

They had been partners for several years, and, by a number of clever pieces of reportorial detective work, had won for themselves the sobriquet of the "Partner Detectives." Although differing so much in character and appearance, they made an excellent team, and it would be difficult to find two persons better suited to each other in their line of work—Dick, headstrong, daring and reckless, and Bert, his pard, long-headed, sedate and slow.

The case upon which we now find them embarked was this:

In 1871 an old gentleman by the name of Rogers, residing in New York City, had purchased one hundred thousand dollars' worth of stock in the "Hollenbock Mining Company," an association which, at that time, owned and worked one of the best paying mines in Colorado.

After one or two dividends had been declared the directors of the company sent out a report that the Hollenbock Mine had been exhausted, and that shares could only be redeemed at five cents on the dollar. Nearly all of the unfortunate stockholders disposed of their shares at this rate, but Mr. Rogers, although reduced to poverty by the collapse of the company, refused to part with his.

Rogers died soon after, and bequeathed to his wife and daughter along with a countless number of debts, the one hundred shares in the Hollenbock Mining Company.

As the years rolled by, the little family supported itself as best it could, never dreaming that the bonds were worth anything, but still retaining them as a sort of memento of the past, and testimony to the fact that they had "seen better days."

A few months before Dick and Bert started westward a man by the name of Allan Theiss had called at the home of the Rogers family and, representing himself to be a lawyer, offered to attempt the collection of the face value of the shares, keeping two per cent. of the amount for his trouble.

The widow gladly gave the bonds into his keeping, never dreaming that the man's dishonesty might cause them still further loss.

A month passed, and as no trace of Theiss could be found, Mrs. Rogers began to make inquiries, and discovered to her astonishment and dismay that the man, who had hitherto been cashier in a bank, had defaulted for half a million dollars. The widow was too poor to employ detectives, but a slight acquaintance with the city editor of the Gazette led her to lay the whole matter before him. And he, seeing a great sensation ahead, placed the "Invincibles" on the trail of Mr. Theiss.

They had discovered the cashier in hiding in New York City, and, becoming alarmed, he at once started westward, as the reporters thought, for the village in Colorado in which the Hollenbock Mine was situated. They had followed him at once, and their progress thus far we have chronicled.

The conference over the pipes ended in action, without much loss of time, and the pard reporters were not long in discovering that, if Mr. Theiss came to Detroit, he had registered at no hotel there, but, in all probability, had merely changed trains and proceeded on his way to Colorado.

This decided, Vinton pushed right on in the pursuit for Chicago, while Carmly obeyed orders from headquarters and ran down to Indianapolis, from whence to make his way West, if the scent led that way.

Dick paused but briefly in the Windy City, and in due time by fast train made his advent in Denver.

At the "Weldon," in the beautiful City of

Hills, the alert reporter-detective fell in with a wandering showman named Austin, who was proprietor of a company of negro minstrels then on a tour through the smaller towns of the Western States.

While dining together, Dick, who had been wondering how he was to make his entrance into society in the Hollenbock mining-town, asked:

"Do you stop at a small place called Amacas, about ten miles south of Junction City? I think there is no railroad connecting with it."

"Yes, we make a one-night stop there. It's a small town, but you can't imagine how the people in these mining-camps turn out to see the show. Everything else closes while we're there."

"When will you get down to that part of your route?"

"Well, we play at Junita on Friday, Silver-side on Saturday, Placer Ranch on Sunday, Junction City on Monday, and Amacas on Tuesday. That's about the course as I recall it."

Dick was revolving a scheme in his mind as Austin counted off the dates on his fingers. When he concluded, the reporter said:

"I want to get into Amacas without attracting attention, if I can. I am doing a little piece of detective work which will require the utmost secrecy and you can help me if you will."

"I shall be pleased to—what can I do?"

"Let me join your show."

"Join the show?"

"Exactly."

"But how will that help you?"

"I will go into Amacas as one of the troupe of minstrels, get taken sick while there, and then will have an excuse for not accompanying you any further. See?"

"Yes."

"If you'll let me join in with the others, I guess I can pass off for a minstrel for a day or two. I'm used to all sorts of disguises."

"All right, I shall be glad to help you. We start on our trip to-morrow morning, but you needn't go on the stage until we get to Amacas."

"That will do very well. I'll see you in the morning. Good-night."

"Good-night."

Dick, telegraphing his whereabouts to Mr. Stranahan, went to bed. He was much pleased with the arrangements with Mr. Austin for accompanying the minstrel troupe into Amacas—where the Hollenbock Mine was situated—for it would introduce him to the persons he would want to meet there, without exciting suspicion.

"I hope my pard Bert will be as fortunate," he thought. "If he comes into a mining-camp with those English clothes of his, I'll bet he will get into trouble the first day. But he's able to take care of himself, if he is such a terrible dude. I'd just like to see him braced up against a full-blooded desperado out here. He'd lay him out if he did, I'll wager a hat."

And thus, recalling the many feats of prowess which Lord Carmly had performed, and thankful that the Englishman was with him on his dangerous mission, the reporter fell asleep. It was quite late when he awoke the next morning, and he barely had time to eat his breakfast before the troupe was ready to start.

Mr. Austin did not question him in regard to his business in Amacas, and Dick appreciated his good taste in not doing so. The trip from Denver to Junita occupied the better part of the day, the troupe reaching the latter city about four o'clock in the afternoon. They immediately paraded through the streets, headed by a brass band, to notify the inhabitants of their arrival, the facilities for advance advertising being very limited in that part of the State.

Detective Dick attended the evening performance, and committed to memory some of the jokes and conundrums with which he was not already familiar. The next day he accompanied the troupe to Silverside, and from there on to Placer Ranch and Junction City, reaching Amacas, as Mr. Austin had promised, Tuesday afternoon.

When the parade had been held, the proprietor of the troupe gave the reporter a little rehearsing in the subordinate part he was to take in the performance.

"You're only a sort of 'super,' but I guess you'll be able to sing a short song, won't you?"

"I don't know," said Dick, doubtfully, rubbing a piece of burnt cork over his face and neck. "I never was much of a singer, but I'll try."

"All right: practice on 'The Last Rose of Summer' until I come back."

"What!" gasped Dick. "You surely don't mean—"

"Why, that's not so very old out here," replied Austin, laughing. "Lots of the people here have never heard it."

Dick resumed his work with a sigh of disgust.

"I believe he's playing some kind of a game on me. If I try to get off that confounded old chestnut, I'll get hooted off the stage," he said to himself, painting his lips a bright red, under the guidance of a brother performer. "If I have to sing at all, I guess I'll sing something new!"

At eight o'clock the curtain went up before an audience of about three hundred men, and the reporter made his "first appearance on any stage," by asking one of the end men why a spool of thread was like an elephant. The time-worn answer relating to the latter's inability to climb a tree awakened uproarious laughter, and the reporter was about to essay a more difficult conundrum, when the audience was thrown into a state of great excitement.

CHAPTER II.

ALLAN THEISS.

WHEN Bert left Dick Vinton at Detroit, he traveled southward as far as Indianapolis, and there began his search for Allan Theiss. The local correspondent for the *Gazette*, a gentleman by the name of Halsted, was first interviewed by the reporter. He had seen a man answering the description of the absconding cashier in the corridors of the Dennison House, but was unable to follow him at the time.

"Do you suppose he is in town yet?" asked Bert.

"I don't know—it was yesterday morning that I met him. I'll go with you to the hotel, and we'll see if he's there now. As near as I can discover, he is traveling under the name of Andrew Terry. That name was entered in the clerk's register, and he will know if the man has left the house."

The two walked together to the hotel, but could find no trace of Theiss there. The man by the name of Terry had left the night before—the clerk did not know what was his destination.

"Well, this is a pretty bad start-off," said the reporter. "If I'd only not here yesterday, we might have caught him. Now, it's totally impossible to tell where, or even in which direction he has gone."

But Bert had been confronted with worse difficulties than that which he now faced, and it did not take him long to make up his mind as to his future actions. He first telegraphed to the *Gazette* office his inability to find Theiss in Indianapolis, and then took a train for Chicago, reaching that city about noon the next day.

He began a search throughout the hotels, and at last made a discovery which put him on the real trail of the cashier. At one of the smaller hostleries he found the name of Andrew Terry on the register, and at once inquired of the clerk:

"Is Mr. Terry in?"

"No, sir."

"Has he left the hotel for good?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"About fifteen minutes ago."

"Where has he gone?"

"I don't know."

Bert glanced anxiously about the room.

"Does any one here know which way he went? I'm very desirous—"

"Bill!" yelled the clerk, interrupting the reporter, "where did you take the man with the red side-whiskers a few minutes ago?"

A colored gentleman, dozing on a pile of trunks opposite the desk, straightened himself up with a suddenness that caused him to topple over and almost fall to the floor.

"What's thet, sah?" he inquired, scrambling to his feet.

"Where did you take the gentleman a few minutes ago—the one with red hair and whiskers?"

"Yes, sah; de depo', sah," replied the confounded dandy. "He changed his whiskers, sah."

The clerk looked at him sternly, while Bert, in spite of the seriousness of the affair, laughed outright.

"He did, fo' a fact," said the colored man, earnestly. "When he went in de kerridge, his

whiskers wuz red, but when he got out at de depo', dey wuz black—black'n yours, sah."

"Where did he go?" asked the reporter, anxiously. "Did you see him buy a ticket?"

"Yes, sah; he's goin' to Kansas City. His whiskers wuz—"

But Bert did not stay to hear any more about Mr. Terry's whiskers. He hastened to the Grand Central and consulted a time-table, to see what time the next train would leave for Kansas City. He soon discovered that the cashier, if such the man he was in chase of proved to be, could not have taken a train westward as yet, and at once began a search throughout the depot. He had seen a photograph of Allan Theiss, and was quite sure that he would recognize him without difficulty if he met him. But he was evidently not in the waiting-room, and as fully an hour would elapse before a train would start for Kansas City, Bert walked to the Sherman House to see if any telegrams had been sent him from New York. He found none, and returned to the station in time to board the train as it pulled out.

He walked slowly through each car in search of the cashier, carefully examining every person who could possibly be Theiss in disguise, but without success. If the man Terry was on board, Bert concluded that he must either be admirably disguised, or else turn out to be some one else besides Theiss.

"The fact that he changed his whiskers makes things look suspicious," thought the reporter, seating himself in the smoking-car. "And then his description tallies exactly with Theiss. I think they must be one and the same, but it's strange he isn't on this train if he's going to Kansas City. Can it be that—"

Bert was just about to remark that a black-whiskered individual in the next seat was acting suspiciously, when his thoughts were interrupted by a sudden, violent shock, and the next instant he was flying about in the car as it rolled and tumbled down a steep embankment, reaching the bottom at last with a crash that sent the reporter heels over head between the seats, with a score of other passengers on top of him. For a moment he was too dazed and bewildered to realize the cause of his violent gyrations, and was called to his senses finally by the liberal profanity of an extremely fat man who lay with his head under one of the seats and supported unaided at least a dozen men piled upon him.

Carmly struggled to his feet, and shook himself to ascertain the extent of his injuries. Beyond a few bruises he was unhurt and at once went to the assistance of his fellow-passengers.

The car, and in fact the whole train, had been derailed and was lying on its side at the foot of the embankment.

Groans, curses and laughter came from the heap of humanity in the corner as with no little difficulty Bert started in to release the fat man. He pulled the unfortunate passenger out, at last, and with the inmates of the other cars went outside to see how much damage the wreck had done. No one had been killed except the engineer and it seemed almost miraculous that so many people had escaped entirely uninjured.

Bert, who had no baggage with him, assisted the others in the search for theirs. The black-whiskered individual he found tearing about among the mail-bags and debris for a sachel, which he said contained valuable papers. Carmly proffered his assistance and before long became satisfied that the man really was Allan Theiss.

The reporter finally discovered the sachel and carried it outdoors, while its owner was still rushing about in the overturned car. He opened it, abstracted one of a large number of papers that it contained, and placing it in his pocket, gave the sachel back to Mr. Theiss, who breathed a sigh of relief when he caught sight of it.

"I'm very much obliged to you, young man," he said. "These Western railroads can't be depended on at all—not at all. Hereafter I shall go West in a horse-car."

His attempt at witticism and a glance at the false whiskers, which had become twisted all out of position, caused the reporter to laugh heartily.

"The roads are safe enough," he said. "But the employees seem to be careless. It's simply wonderful that so many people have escaped here. We must have rolled fully a hundred yards."

"I guess we did," replied the cashier, affably. "I'm none the worse for the adventure, however, and am ready to go on to Kansas City. Which way do you go?"

"I'm bound for Denver."

"There's where I go the day after to-morrow. Can't you stop over and go out with me? It's a long ride, and company is very pleasant."

"Well, I don't know," said Bert, doubtfully, although he was really not at all doubtful about accepting the invitation. "I'm in no hurry, for at present I'm out of work. I guess I'll be able to wait over night, instead of going straight out."

All the afternoon the passengers on the wrecked train camped near the railroad track, and it was nearly dark when the relief-train picked them up and continued its journey westward. Carmly and Mr. Theiss had become fast friends, the former using every endeavor to ingratiate himself into the cashier's good graces.

On the way to Kansas City a lively conversation was kept up, and the reporter told Theiss a fairy-tale in response to the cashier's questions regarding his business in the West.

"I've been a commercial traveler," he said, until very lately. At present I'm out of work and looking for a job."

"How would you like to go to Colorado and work for me for a few months? I'm engaged in stock and mining speculation out there, and could use a young fellow like you."

"I'd like to go very much," replied Bert. "I've never been West before, but I think I could soon learn enough of the business to satisfy you."

"I'm sure of it," said Theiss, enthusiastically.

"Here's my card."

He handed the reporter a bit of pasteboard on which was printed:

"Andrew Terry, representing the Hollenbock Mining Company, Amacas, Col."

"At present I am engaged in disposing of the company's stock," he said. "The concern has been idle for some time, but we are going to float it again. The mine we are working is near Amacas, and was discovered in 1870. It's very valuable, but the directors sort of worked an imposition on the stockholders, and broke things up—you understand?"

Bert nodded.

"That's one of the ways money is made out here, I suppose," he said. "It's certainly a very good one."

"You bet it is," replied the cashier. "But now as to your work. If you come in with me, I'll have to let you into some trade secrets."

"Of course," assented Bert.

"And you'll know enough to keep your mouth shut, won't you?"

"Yes, sir!" said the reporter, with great emphasis.

"All right; it's a bargain," and Theiss started in to outline the duties of his assistant, and had scarcely finished, when Kansas City was reached.

In his conversation, he carefully refrained from saying anything that would arouse Bert's suspicions. The work which he laid out for the reporter was that which usually falls to the lot of a private-secretary, and Carmly rejoiced greatly over his good-luck in falling in with the man so readily.

The two stopped at the same hotel the next night, and in the morning continued their journey westward, reaching Denver two days later. They at once set out for Amacas, Bert being unable to discover anything on the way that would tend to criminate the cashier. The paper which he had taken from the sachel and which he still retained, was a certificate of stock for a one-hundred-dollar share in the Hollenbock Mining Company.

They arrived at Amacas Monday afternoon, the day before Austin's Minstrel Troupe played their one-night engagement in the village. Bert accompanied his employer, for such Mr. Theiss had become, to the residence of Mr. Hollenbock, the president of the mining company.

He resided in the largest house in Amacas, and was reputed to be immensely wealthy. He had but one relative living with him, his daughter, and they lived by themselves, receiving frequent and occasionally lengthy visits from gentlemen from the East. He acted as resident manager and overseer of the company's property in and about Amacas, and received a princely salary for his work.

When Theiss called, with the reporter, Mr. Hollenbock received them with open arms, and was evidently much pleased with a report which the cashier handed in relating to his success in floating the company's stock.

Bert was unable to hear anything of the conversation which ensued, and, when it was over, accompanied Mr. Theiss on a tour of the village.

The latter had exchanged his small sachel, at

the residence of Mr. Hollenbock, for one considerably larger, and which he handled very carefully.

"I want to go to the cabin of a man named Cody," he said, leading the way down the principal street of the village. "If you'll come along with me, you will get an insight into the way these fellows live. You are to stop with me at Hollenbock's, and, after to-morrow, you'll have work enough to keep you busy."

"Where is the mine?" asked Carmly, innocently.

"Back here a ways," replied Theiss, nodding in a direction that might include several square miles. "We are only just starting it up. This man Cody, or 'Doc,' as he is called, is superintendent of the mine, under old Hollenbock. He's a man you ought to know."

They soon reached Cody's cabin, and found its owner stretched out on a bed, inside. He did not seem particularly pleased to see his visitors, merely nodding in response to the reporter's introduction.

"Here's something I wish you would keep for me, Doc," said Theiss, holding the sachel to the man. "Put it where it will be safe for a few days, will you?"

Doc drew from under the bed a stout wooden box, deposited the sachel inside and shoved it back with his foot.

"It'll be safe there, I reckon," he said. "What's in it—anythin' valuable?"

"Well, yes; but not very much so," answered Theiss, slowly. "Just keep your eye on it for a day or two. I don't want to keep it up at Hollenbock's."

"All right," replied Cody, carelessly; and Bert wondered why the cautious Theiss trusted this rough-looking man so implicitly. He asked no questions, however, and, presently, accompanied the cashier back to Hollenbock's house.

CHAPTER III.

DICK MEETS DOC CODY.

THE minstrel show had scarcely gotten under way when a pistol-shot was heard, and one of the merry singers fell heavily from his chair to the stage. Instantly the whole audience was thrown into the greatest confusion. A dozen men made a break for the door, while the rest surrounded the window through which the bullet had come.

On the stage the wounded minstrel was being cared for by his companions. Austin, terribly alarmed, and unable to account for the unusual proceedings, rushed out of the doors, and inquired the way for Doc Cody's—the only practicing physician in Amacas. He found him asleep, and, after barely escaping with his life, for the doctor had taken him for a burglar, the two started back to see how seriously the man was injured.

The hall was almost deserted when they returned. All the men were out searching for a clue to the would-be murderer. On the stage the wounded man lay, with his head pillowed in a brother performer's lap, while two others were washing the burnt cork from his face. They permitted Doc Cody to examine him.

"He's a goner, I reckon," said the physician. "Bear a hand here, till we carry him over ter my cabin. He'd die easier thar; keerful now, don't mind ther bleed."

Supported between four strong men, the unconscious form of the minstrel was carried down the street, and into Doc Cody's cabin. Here the bearers laid it on the bed, and left it in Doc's charge, volunteering their services at the burial. When they were gone, Cody carefully washed the blood and dirt from the wounded man's face, and brushing the hair back from the place where the bullet had struck, was pleased to find that the missile had merely plowed a deep furrow in the side of his head, and not entered the brain as he had supposed.

He bound up the wounded place, and adjusted his patient comfortably in the bed, while he set about to resuscitate him. A little Colorado whisky poured between his parted lips, brought the man to consciousness.

"What's the matter?" he asked feebly, making no attempt at rising. "Who hit me?"

"I dunno," replied Doc, preparing sleeping accommodations for himself. "It wuz a bullet, I reckon."

"Did somebody shoot me?"

"Well, slightly. I didn't see ther racket myself, but the boys sent fur me when you wuz hurt. My name's Doc Cody an' I'm ther only saw-bones in ther place."

"My name is Vinton—Dick Vinton. I was in the minstrel troupe that played here to-night. I was sitting on the stage when all of a sudden

something struck me in the head. It didn't hurt then—but it does now."

"It'll pain you fur sum' time, but the bullet only jist raised ther skin. If it hed been an inch or so over it 'u'd laid you cold."

Detective Dick looked about the plainly-furnished room and then into the face of the man beside him. It was a face combining in itself the expression of great good-nature, honesty and recklessness. The reporter, whose injury he could in nowise account for, felt that Doc was a man to be trusted.

"Do you know who shot me?" he asked abruptly.

The other shook his head.

"The boys air out lookin' fur ther son uv a gun now," he said, seating himself by the reporter's side. "I reckon it would go hard with him ef he wuz ketched."

"I can't imagine why any one should want to shoot me," replied Dick. "I've never been here before in my life. Where's Austin—the manager of the minstrel troupe?"

"He's comin' around to see you in the mornin'." I told all ther boys ter keep away to-night, 'lowin' that you'd want ter rest easy, even ef you didn't die befor' then."

Dick shuddered as he said:

"It was a narrow escape. I only joined the troupe at Denver—I'm not a regular singer."

"Must hev been mighty hard up ter take ter sech bizness," remarked Doc with a laugh. "But lay down now an' go ter sleep—ther's what I'm a-goin' ter do. We kin chin in ther mornin'—you'll feel better then."

"But, isn't this your bed?" asked Dick. "Where'll you sleep?"

"Down hyer," said Doc, stretching himself out on the floor without even removing his boots. "Jest blow out that glim an' then go ter sleep."

"All right, but I'm awful sorry to inconvenience you by—"

But a loud snore from Mr. Cody interrupted him and Dick sunk back on the soft pillows and soon fell asleep.

He awoke quite early the next morning. His head felt much better, and as he opened his eyes he was greeted with the savory smell of frying bacon.

"Good-mornin'," said Cody, pleasantly. "I'm jest gittin' breakfus—how d'ye feel?"

"Splendid," replied Dick. "My head aches a little, but otherwise I'm all right. That breakfast of yours smells first-class."

"It is," said Doc, skillfully throwing a flap-jack into the air and catching it as it came down. "Thar ain't nothin' in the world that kin beat good bacon an' flap-jacks fur a hungry man. Do you want ter git up?"

Dick replied by throwing aside the bed-covering and sitting up in bed.

"I'm a little dizzy—What's that?"

A loud knock on the door started Cody into dropping one of the cakes into the fire.

"You go to the door," he said, grasping a long knife from his belt and trying energetically to save the burning flap-jack.

But when he looked up his companion had disappeared.

"Here I am," said Dick, from under the bed. "I don't want to be seen, and if it's any one is here to see me just tell them I died last night, will you?"

Doc looked puzzled, but he nodded with a smile, and the reporter crawled back under out of sight as another loud knock was heard.

"Come in," yelled Cody, resuming his culinary operations. "Howdy, Mr. Terry?"

The cashier responded gruffly that he was as well as usual.

"I come here after that sachel," he said, closing the door behind him. "I'm going to send it out to Denver with that young man who was with me the other day."

"Who is he?" asked Doc.

"He's a young English drummer by the name of Carmly. Pretty sound man—but kind of dudish. I can trust him, though, and that's everything."

Doc was about to reach under the bed after the box in which he had placed the sachel, when he suddenly halted and looked uneasily at Mr. Terry. He remembered that Dick was in hiding under there and had requested that he should not be disturbed.

The cashier did not notice the other's embarrassment.

"They said around to the house last night that a young man who was singing in the minstrel show up at Uncle Sam's had been shot and brought here. Where is he?"

"He's dead," replied Cody. "Ther boys carried him out a little while ago."

"Do you know who he was?"

"No," replied Doc absently, trying hard to think of some way out of the difficulty. "Say, Mr. Terry," he finally blurted out. "You can't git that sachel now."

"What!" exclaimed the cashier, staggering back. "Do you mean to say that you haven't got it?"

"No, not exactly," stammered Cody. "But you can't git it jest this minute. Ef you'll go away an' cum back in half an hour I'll hev it fur you."

Terry looked at him sharply as he replied:

"I don't know what you mean, Doc, but I'll do as you say. There's five hundred thousand dollars in that sachel and you're the only man in God's world I'd trust with it."

"All right," said Doc in a relieved tone of voice. "You can have it in a little while, but just now I've got good reasons—Hello! what's the matter now?"

The door suddenly flew open and Bert Carmly, very pale and excited rushed in.

"Quick, Mr. Terry," he cried. "The devil's to pay up at old Hollenbock's, and he's started out to look for you with a gun. You'd better light out for he's in a terrible rage over something."

The cashier turned pale as death.

"Get me a horse," he cried to Bert. "Go and hire or buy one anywhere—quick!"

He drew from his pocket a roll of bills and handed them to Carmly, who immediately disappeared. Then turning to Cody, he said excitedly.

"Get me that sachel at once. There isn't a moment to lose—for this is a matter of life and death."

Doc hesitated for a moment and then dived under the bed. Just as he did so there was a tramp of horses feet outside, a couple of pistol-shots and loud yells, and then the horseman galloped off as Cody crawled back again.

No one was in sight. Terry had mysteriously and suddenly disappeared and no trace of him was left.

"Well, this is kinder strange," muttered Doc, hurrying to the door and looking out. "I wonder what in blazes all this funny-bizness is about. I reckon there's trouble ahead fur some one."

He shut the door, locking it on the inside, and called to Dick:

"Come out, sonny. No one's here now."

The reporter crawled from under the bed with a sigh of relief.

"That was pretty close," he said, seating himself. "What's all this trouble about anyway?"

"I dunno," said Doc, mournfully trying to resuscitate some of the scorched flap-jacks. "I wish some uv these lunatics would wait till a man had breakfast before beginnin' ther durned rumpus. Ever sence I worked for old Hollenbock I've been in hot water of some kind."

"Who's this old Hollenbock?" asked Dick, seating himself opposite Cody at a small table and commencing to eat his breakfast.

"Oh, he's an old Dutch fraud," said the latter with great frankness. "He an' some other durned fules air runnin' a mine out here near Los Perces Creek. It is one uv the best payin' gold mines in the State, but they only began to work it a few weeks ago. When they first sold stocks in it about a dozen years back, old Hollenbock and the rest uv 'em bu'sted up the comp'ny, and ever sence they've been buyin' up all the old stock awful cheap. They've got it about all in now, an' ther old man an' this feller Terry own the whole thing I reckon."

"And who is Terry?"

"I giv' it up. He cum hyer from ther East about a month ago, and sence then he an' old Hollenbock hez been thicker'n hops."

"Do you work for them?"

"Yes, I'm superintendent of the mine. It ain't exactly in workin' order yet, but it will be by the end uv this week, an' I reckon it'll be a payin' kind uv job fur me. I don't like, partic'ly, to work fur sech durned rascals, but everything goes, out hyer, you know."

Dick smiled as he answered:

"I suppose so; but are you sure all the stock of the original company has been bought up?"

"I'm pooty sart'in uv it. They wuzn't a-goin' ter start ther mine until it wuz all in old Hollenbock's paws. This feller Terry hez been travelin' all over ther kentry buyin' up ther stuff dirt cheap. All ther stockholders wuz glad ter git rid uv it—thinkin' that the mine wuzn't uv no account."

The two finished breakfast, Dick thinking

carefully over the information he had just received. He had heard the conversation that passed between Cody and the cashier, and thought it very probable that if the sachel under the bed really did contain five hundred thousand dollars, that the money was that which Theiss had stolen from the bank in New York City.

He was greatly surprised, as well as delighted, at hearing Lord Carmly's voice when he entered the cabin so abruptly, and could not imagine how he had gotten into Theiss's confidence to such an extent.

"We're getting on finely," he thought as he helped his new-found friend clear up the breakfast dishes. "I guess the Invincibles will not only run down Theiss for robbing the bank, but clear up this fraud in the Hollenbock Mining Company—so called—as well. What a 'sweep' it will be for the *Gazette*, eh?"

CHAPTER IV.

BERT FALLS IN WITH HOLLENBOCK.

DR. CODY'S description of Caleb Hollenbock as "an old Dutch fraud" was impolite, but accurate. Hollenbock was Amacas's first settler. He came West in 1870, and a year later, while prospecting in the vicinity, discovered the mine which he named after himself, and at once organized a company to operate it. He grew rich, and, as property increased in value in and near Amacas—which he had tried to name Hollenbockville—he was able to count his money by the millions, and was looked up to as one of the foremost men in the West.

He made the acquaintance of Allan Theiss—or Andrew Terry, as he knew him—about a month before our story opens. The cashier seemed to have plenty of money, and, although he could give no plausible reasons for his visit to Amacas, soon became acquainted with the wealthy old miner. The acquaintanceship led to something more, and ere long he was taken into confidential partnership with Mr. Hollenbock.

When he returned with Bert, he had been absent for a few days on a journey to an Eastern city. He had employed the reporter on the impulse of the moment, scarcely knowing what work he would be able to give him to do.

Hollenbock was inclined to look upon Bert with disfavor and on the second day of his stay in Amacas called him into his library for consultation.

"I don't know v'at for Mr. Terry prought you here," he said, seating himself and motioning for his companion to do the same. "Budt id seems to me that we ain't got no use for you, don't id?"

"I don't know," replied the reporter, doubtfully.

"I vhas not sure dot Terry himself knows what he vhas aboutd," continued the old gentleman. "He cert'ingly acts very queer all the time, you t'ink so?"

Bert shifted uneasily in his seat and glanced out of the window without replying.

"He vhas a verry intelligent man," resumed Mr. Hollenbock, slowly. "Budt I can't understand v'y he coome outd here to this place. I haf an idea mebbe he's done somet'ing wrong in de East an' he's here hiding."

Carmly could have enlightened him on that point but he only shook his head absently.

"I don't know anything about him."

"I vhas t'ink dotd vey myself," said the other, rising to his feet and walking up and down nervously. "And v'at I vant to know peside v'as—are you honest?"

The old man knitted his heavy brows and stared fixedly into the reporter's face. He seemed to be satisfied with his scrutiny, and again sat down.

"Pecause, ef you vhas perfectly honest, I might haf use for you myself. I haf in this house a large sum of money in cash and bonds v'ich I would like to haf taken to Denver an' deposited in a bank to my credit, dofersthan?"

Bert nodded.

"I will undertake to deposit them safely if you care to trust me with them," he said, simply.

"A't rightd, dotd vhas jhust v'at I vant. I'm gittin' pooty old myself lately, an' I can't gedt aroundt like I use to. Ef you vhas sthay here, mebbe ve can use you anyvay, eh? I vill go an' bring you t'e money outd an' you can sthart for Denver to-night."

The old man hobbled from the room, and in a few minutes a terrible uproar came from across the hall. Bert darted outside, almost running into Mr. Hollenbock in his haste to discover the cause of the unusual commotion.

"Id vhas gone!" groaned the old gentleman, falling into a chair and staring vacantly at the reporter. "I haf been robbed!"

"Of what?"

"I hadt nearly fife hundred thousand tollars in a black sachel in my safe in the room shust across the hall. It vhas mostly in Government bonds v'ich I godt lasdt week from a man in San Francisco in payment for some mining-stock."

"Are you sure it's gone?" asked Bert, dazed by the theft of so much money.

"Of coorse I'm sure. Dotd man Terry took id."

The mention of the cashier's name seemed to arouse him to action. He started to his feet and ran out of the room, with Bert at his heels.

"Hello, Bill!" he yelled to a man who was saddling a couple of horses in the rear of the house. "Get a dozen men and coome here—quick!"

Bill, who was a tall and powerful black man, put his head inside the barn door and said something to the men within. In a few minutes they came out, mounted on Hollenbock's horses, and surrounded the old man.

"Go outd undt catch dotd man Terry!" he shouted, waving his hands and dancing about. "He haf stole a sachel full of money—herel gedt me a horse."

The old man forgot his age and infirmity in his eagerness to recover the lost bonds, and in a few seconds was himself leading the way toward Doc Cody's cabin. Bert had hurried on ahead to warn Theiss of his danger and possibly save his life.

The result was something he had not calculated on. The sudden appearance of Hollenbock and his party, after Carmly's warning, caused the cashier to take to his legs and run for his life down the road. The others set after him, shouting and yelling as they ran.

In a few minutes he was run down, yanked into a saddle, and carried back to Cody's, a prisoner.

"V'ere ish dotd money you took?" asked Hollenbock, excitedly jabbing Theiss in the back with a revolver butt. "V'at you do vith id, eh?"

"What money?" asked the cashier, coolly. "Did you think I had taken any money?"

"Didt I t'ink so? Vell, I like that," a half-dozen vigorous punches with the revolver butt; "V'y did you run away from me shust now, aind't id?"

"Well, I—that is—you see, I thought you were after somet'ing else," stammered Theiss, in confusion. "I didn't take any of your money, but I did do somet'ing else, and I thought mebbe—that is—of coorse—perhaps you wouldn't like it."

A malicious grin spread itself over the features of the old miner as he replied:

"Dotd vhas very nice, budt v'at vhas it you did, I dunno?"

The cashier looked around among the faces at his side, but saw nothing of pity there, and then blurted out:

"I was to have eloped with Bonnie."

"V'at!" roared Hollenbock, almost driving his revolver through the man in his rage and astonishment. "You vhas goin' ter take Bonnie?"

"That's what I said," muttered Theiss sullenly. "But I didn't take any of your money—I've got enough of my own."

"Vell, py t'e great almighty Moses!" yelled the old man. "Ef you haf nodd more nerve than a prass monkey, I vhas a sucker."

They had reached Cody's cabin by this time, and the doctor himself stood in the doorway looking at them.

"What air you doin' with him?" he asked, nodding toward the trembling prisoner. "What hez he been doin'?"

"He haf sthole five hundret thousand tollars from me," said Hollenbock, excitedly, dismounting and approaching the cabin. "Haf you seen anyt'ing uf id?"

To every one's surprise, Cody replied:

"Yes, he brought it here day before yesterday fur me ter keep. It wuz in a black sachel."

"Yes—yes—dotd vhas id," screamed the old man, hopping about in front of the cabin while two men held the cashier, who showed signs of violent insanity. "V'here ish id—gedt id fur me—quick."

"It ain't here."

"V'at—v'at you say?"

"I say it ain't here. A young fellow took it away only a few minutes ago."

"V'y you ledt him haf idt, you fool!" roared the old man. "V'ere ish he gone? Who vhas he?"

"I don't know."

By this time Theiss had managed to get control of his voice.

"What in thunder did you do with that sachel of mine, Doc?" he shouted, while his captors tried in vain to keep him quiet. "Do you mean you've let some one take that?"

"Yes—that's what I said. I reckon the right one'll get it, though—that young dude you brought out hyer hez got it now."

A sigh of relief escaped the lips of the cashier, and even Hollenbock seemed to feel better at realizing that the sachel was in Carmly's possession.

"Dotd vhas all right," he said, turning to his men. "Coome, poy's, ve vill go pack."

They started for Hollenbock's residence, paying no attention to Theiss's pleadings. He assured them that the sachel he had given to Cody to keep for him was rightfully his own, and that he had brought it with him from the East.

But when in reply to Hollenbock's question as to the amount of money it contained, he mentioned a half-million dollars, the old man sneeringly told him to go to the "tuyful."

"Maype you haf us pelieve dotd you haf so mooch money a-carryin' it aroundt the country, budt I t'ink nod. Dotd money vhas mine, an' as soon as I gedt id I vill send you away. I haf noddings to do mit such t'iefs as you."

"But when you get the money," retorted the cashier, energetically, "you will see that it isn't yours."

"Maype I vill, budt I know better."

Theiss turned from him with a gesture of disgust and rode along, buried in moody reflections.

"Here I was, just ready to light out with Bonnie, and had everything ready for a splendid time," he muttered to himself, paying no attention to Mr. Hollenbock's questions, "when this old fool gets some kind of an idea into his head that I've robbed him of some of his money. He never had seen those bonds in the sachel and didn't even know that I had them, or I'd think he had gotten up some kind of a scheme to rob me. He's a cute old cuss, but I don't see what on earth he's drivin' at now; I certainly haven't taken anything of his. Well, if Carmly's got the sachel, I'll get it. At present I'll try my best to escape, and once free, I'll get the bonds and take Bonnie with me out of this accursed country. I'm sorry I ever had anything to do with this Hollenbock Mining Company business, anyway."

Meanwhile, thoughts of an entirely different nature were passing through the brilliant intellect of Caleb Hollenbock. He had not the slightest doubt but that Theiss had taken the bonds and hidden them with Cody. As to the cashier's story of an elopement with his daughter Bonnie, he gave but little attention to it. Bonnie was as sensible in his eyes as she was pretty, and the old man did not believe her capable of falling in love with such a man as Theiss.

"I vill keep him vith me until I gedt t'e money back, an' t'en gedt rid of him," he mused. "He vhas a t'ief all t'e vay t'rough, an' shust so soon as I see dotd young feller mit der sachel, I vill haf noddings more to do with Mr. Terry."

When the party reached the Hollenbock mansion, the cashier was escorted to a room on the first floor, and in spite of his protestations was locked up, and given to understand that he would be held a prisoner until the money was recovered. He had not been confined to his room very long before the door was gently unlocked and opened, admitting the pretty daughter of the old miner, Bonnie Hollenbock.

"Why, Mr. Terry," she exclaimed, hastening toward him. "What does all this mean?"

"I don't know," replied the prisoner, mournfully. "Your father has somehow or other gotten the idea that I've robbed him. He says—Why, what's the matter with you?"

The girl had burst into a fit of hearty but subdued laughter.

"Oh, it's too good," she exclaimed, dancing around the bewildered man.

"Is it?" asked Theiss, doubtfully. "I don't see as it is—not for me."

Bonnie came to him, and putting her arm affectionately about his neck, said:

"I took the money."

"What!"

"I thought we'd need some if we were going to run away and get married, and when I heard father say that there was so much money in the sachel I took and hid it. Wes that wrong?"

The innocent blue eyes looked into Theiss's with an expression of reproach.

"I don't think it was very," she continued. "Father would have given it to me for the ask-

ing, and then—it would have been mine, anyway, when he died."

Such reasoning as this bewildered the cashier, who was a practical thief and did not deal in sentiment.

"You did right—I suppose," he said slowly. "But then it was not necessary. I had plenty of money for both."

"I know, but it was so unequal for you to provide everything. What shall I do now?"

"Do? Why let us get away from here as quickly as possible. My money, which I gave to Doc Cody for safe-keeping, has been confiscated by your father, so that it will be necessary to get the other now. I'm sorry to place you in such a position, though, Bonnie."

"Don't mind," she said lightly. "Wait here a moment."

She left the room and Theiss, when the door closed, sighed aloud.

"Poor little girl! She thinks so much of me—and I reciprocate the affection, I suppose. I wonder why I have made such an impression upon her. I guess it must be because I'm so different from these people out here that it's a relief to see a civilized man. Well, let things go as they will."

Bonnie, poor, unsophisticated girl, although devoted to her old father, was tired of existence in the lonely western village, and eagerly longed for the excitement and gaiety of city life as portrayed to her by Theiss. And he, taking advantage of this longing, had proposed marriage to the girl and had been accepted. Owing, however, to her father's peculiar ideas of matrimony the service would have to be performed secretly, and the two planned an elopement, which was broken up by the disappearance of the old gentleman's money.

Theiss had not long to wait. The girl soon returned, enveloped in a long, black cloak, and carrying a small sachel in one hand.

"I am ready," she said simply, and the two left the house together, and taking a deserted and roundabout path, started to walk to Junction City.

CHAPTER V.

LUKE GUYSON'S HIDEOUT.

THE conversation between Detective Dick and Cody was interrupted shortly after the disappearance of the cashier by the sudden entrance of Bert, who halted with an exclamation of surprise at the sight of his pard.

"Why Dick," he cried, rushing forward to grasp the other's hand. "I'm mighty glad to see you—when did you get here?"

"Several days ago. I was shot and brought to this house for treatment. To day, when you came to warn Theiss, I was hiding under the bed."

Doc regarded the two with undisguised amazement.

"Wa-al by gosh!" he finally exclaimed. "How in all that's wonderful did you two git acquainted? An' who is this Theiss yo'r talkin' about?"

The detectives exchanged glances and then Dick said:

"I'm sure we can trust Doc. Let's tell him the whole story and perhaps he'll be able to help us."

In a few words as possible Vinton told Cody who they were and what their business was in that part of the country. When he had concluded, Bert suggested that they examine the sachel under the bed.

They pulled it out, but before they could open it a sound of horses' hoofs was heard in front and Bert bolted out of the back door with the sachel in one hand and Dick following close upon his heels. They ran for some distance and finally, reaching a secluded spot about a mile from the village, opened the sachel.

The cashier had told the truth in regard to its contents.

It was nearly filled with U. S. Government bonds of old dates, the principal and interest of which would amount to nearly half a million dollars.

"Phew!" said Dick when they had concluded the examination. "I never saw so much money as this in a heap in my life."

"Nor I," replied Bert. "The question now is, however, what shall we do with it?"

"I don't know. The money clearly is that which Theiss stole from the New York bank."

"It must be, but what do you suppose old Hollenbock is driving at? He says that he had five hundred thousand dollars in Government bonds in a sachel too. Do you suppose there are two sachels?"

"There must be. Or else the old Dutchman is

trying to get the money which his partner stole. It may be that Hollenbock is up to some such scheme."

"I doubt it," said Bert. "He was too sincere in charging Theiss with stealing it. It seems strange that a million dollars should be floating about in this way, but I guess such is the case. Both men are pretty sure to— Quick, Dick! get out of sight; here comes some one."

The two crouched down behind a spreading bush and watched two persons pass in front of them. One was Allan Theiss, and Bert recognized the other as Bonnie Hollenbock, but what interested him most was the small black sachel which she carried in one hand.

"Dick," he whispered when they had gone by, "you follow them, while I get rid of this money. The girl is old Hollenbock's daughter and she has got the other sachel in her hand. Theiss has been mighty sweet on her lately and I suppose they are going to run off together. If I were you I'd try to get that money—they can't go very far without it. Meet me at Cody's when you get through."

With this hurriedly-whispered advice the two separated. Dick hastened on after Theiss and the girl, while his partner sat on the ground, wondering what he was to do with his strangely-acquired fortune.

Vinton followed the two for nearly a mile further. They seemed in doubt as to their course at first, but finally struck straight out into the woods, following a narrow path which eventually brought them to a large, well-kept cabin, surrounded by a tall picket-fence. Theiss knocked at the gate and was immediately admitted to the inclosure, and probably to the house.

Detective Dick threw himself down within a hundred yards of the cabin, and for a couple of hours watched it in vain. At the end of that time he was rewarded with a sight of the cashier, who came out, this time accompanied by a rough-looking, loose-jointed fellow, whom Dick at once set down as the proprietor of the place.

They walked quite near the reporter, but he was unable to hear any of their whispered conversation. When they had passed out of sight, Dick arose and slowly approached the cabin. At the doorway he gave a loud knock, repeating it a couple of times, as only the echo answered. Then he looked about him to see if there was any other entrance to the stronghold.

Discovering none, he made an attempt at scaling the high picket-fence, and after a half-dozen failures was successful in doing so. The inclosure on the inside was about six feet wide, and ran entirely around the cabin. The building itself was very strongly constructed, and reminded the reporter of the old Indian block-houses he had read of in histories.

There were two entrances to the cabin, one in the rear and one in the front, but in the surrounding wall there was but one. Vinton boldly knocked at one of the doors and was almost immediately admitted by Bonnie herself.

She started back with a scream at sight of the detective.

"Do you live here?" she asked quickly. "Luke said that only he and Molly were here."

"I don't live here," answered Dick. "But I have business here now. Where has Luke and Mr. Terry gone?"

"To Junction City—after a minister," she added, with a pretty blush.

"Well, Bonnie, I'm sorry to interrupt the nuptials, but I fear I shall have to."

She stared at him, and shrugged her shapely shoulders without replying.

"This man whom you know as Terry is a thief, and his right name is Theiss—Allan Theiss!"

"It can't be! How do you know? Who are you?" gasped the frightened girl, sinking into the nearest chair. "Who has told you all those things?"

"I know them to be true," answered Dick, earnestly. "My name is Vinton, and I am a detective from New York. If you marry this man, you will be as good as a widow within a few weeks afterward, for he is sure to be arrested and imprisoned for crime."

The young man spoke so sincerely that the girl was convinced of the truth of his remarks in spite of herself.

"You say his name is what?"

"Allan Theiss."

"And he is a thief?"

"He is indeed. He robbed a bank in New York of nearly five hundred thousand dollars."

The poor girl burst into tears and looked up into the reporter's face despairingly.

"What shall I do?" she cried. "I can't get out of here for the gate in the outer wall is locked. How did you get in?"

"I climbed over the fence; but you could scarcely do that. I guess I can break down the door, and we will be able to escape before they come back."

He started for the door, but suddenly paused and looked around the room. In one corner a triangular closet had been built, and into this he plunged just as the door opened, admitting the cashier, Luke Guyson and Bert.

The latter had been discovered with the sachel, and believing that it would be best under the circumstances, had given it to Theiss without comment.

The latter was much pleased, and brought him to the cabin as a safe retreat and a refuge from the wrath of Caleb Hollenbock.

"Hello!" said Theiss, observing the pale face of his intended bride. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing," she answered, feebly, for the presence of the three men and her knowledge of Dick's hiding-place frightened her. "I don't feel very well; that's all."

"I thought perhaps you had already gotten tired of me and wanted to go back to your father's. We didn't go to Junction City as I intended, for we met this young man on the road with my sachel and money, and brought them both here for safe-keeping."

The girl nodded, glancing furtively at the well-dressed young man, whom in her mind she could not associate with such men as Luke Guyson and her promised husband.

"We'll have to postpone the wedding-ceremony," said the latter. "But to-morrow we'll both go to Junction City, deposit all these bonds in a bank, get married, and then take a long wedding-tour."

He now had both sachels in his possession, and at once placed all the bonds in the larger of the two, giving the money to Mr. Guyson.

"I want to put this in some safe place," he said. "I guess I'll let Bonnie herself take care of it. Luke and I are going to have a little game of cards."

He handed the sachel to the girl and then took a seat opposite Guyson at a small square table. Luke invited Bert to join them, but he declined, professing ignorance of the game, and proceeded to strike up an acquaintanceship with the girl, with a view of warning her of her peril. But he had no opportunity of doing so for some time, and finally wrote on a slip of paper:

"Don't marry that man—he is a thief," and handed it to Bonnie.

She read it, but to his surprise did not seem to be greatly agitated thereby, and tore up the paper nonchalantly. Then she arose, and, walking across the room, placed the sachel on the inside of the three-cornered closet in which Dick Vinton was confined, locking the door as she did so. Then she handed the key to the cashier, saying:

"The money will be safe enough in there until to-morrow. I'm going up-stairs now to bed."

The cashier, who held a pair of jacks and was trying to bluff his antagonist out of three queens, merely nodded, placing the key in his pocket, while Lord Carmly regarded the game with growing interest.

In the closet, Dick Vinton was slowly but surely being suffocated.

He had just determined to make a fight for liberty when Bonnie placed the sachel beside him and locked the door. As he moved slightly to make room he felt behind him a projecting window ledge, and at once saw what the young lady was at.

When she closed and locked the door he turned around and examined it more closely and found to his delight that a small window opened from the closet directly into the open air. It was evidently placed there to admit light, and was hid by a heavy square shutter which moved on squeaky hinges.

It was a pretty close shave, but Dick determined to attempt it. He first opened the sachel and threw the contents out of the window, placing inside a pair of old boots which were in the closet. Then he poked his head and shoulders through and wriggled like an eel until he fell head-foremost to the ground. He hastily arose, closed the shutter and picked up the papers, and at once set out for Doc Cody's cabin.

His departure was wholly unnoticed by the people inside. Bonnie had gone up-stairs with Molly Guyson, the wife of Luke, who, with Theiss, was deeply interested in the game of cards.

Bert wandered about the room, inspecting a

few cheap prints on the walls and occasionally stopping to watch an unusually exciting deal.

"Say, Mr. Terry," he finally said, "am I to stay here?"

"Not very long," replied the cashier. "You did me a good turn in finding that sachel to-day, and I shall see that you are taken care of."

"All right," responded Bert. "I suppose I can take a walk to the village if I want to?"

"Yes; but keep clear of old Hollenbock and his men. If they see you they will be sure to ask about the sachel."

Bert promised to do so, and left the cabin, starting at once for Doc Cody's. He could not imagine where Dick had gone, and thought it possible he would meet him at the redoubtable doctor's cabin.

"I'm sorry I lost that sachel," he said to himself, as he walked rapidly along, taking note of the path to insure a speedy return. "But I guess I'll be able to get it again. The thing I must do now is to warn that foolish young lady of the character of her future husband. If she persists in marrying him, then it will be her own fault. I think she isn't aware of what a rascal he really is."

Carmly hurried on toward Doc Cody's, reaching the cabin late in the afternoon. Just as he crossed the threshold he caught sight of Dick Vinton.

The two exchanged greetings, and then Bert said:

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but I lost those bonds."

"Well, it doesn't make any difference. I've got them now."

"What?"

"I've got the bonds—all of them, old Hollenbock's and the ones Theiss had."

"You must be mistaken, for I saw them locked up in a closet in a cabin, away back in the woods not more than an hour ago. And I'll bet a hat that the key is in Theiss's pocket now."

"I know it," replied Dick, coolly, "but I was in the closet."

"With the sachel?"

"Yes, and escaped through a small window in the rear with the bonds, leaving the sachel there."

Carmly looked at his partner with undisguised approbation.

"You're a darling," he cried. "But I must get back—just imagine what a storm there will be when Theiss finds that the money is gone!"

The two exchanged stories, and then Carmly started back to the cabin in the woods, not without some misgivings as to the result of the adventure.

CHAPTER VI.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE WOODS.

THE largest saloon in Amacas was called the "Uncle Sam." The proprietor was a rough-looking but good-natured man by the name of Jim Waters, better known among his friends and acquaintances as Buckeye Jim, from his having been born and brought up in the State of Ohio.

All the entertainments—and they were quite frequent—that were held in the town took place at "Uncle Sam's." No shooting affray of any importance was ever known to occur outside its walls, and, as a gambling-house, it was equal to any in that part of the State.

On the night that, and only a short time after, Lord Carmly set out for Luke Guyson's cabin, the noisy festivities of Buckeye Jim's resort were interrupted by the entrance of no less a personage than old Caleb Hollenbock. As it was the first time he had ever been seen in that or any other similar place in Amacas, the frequenters of "Uncle Sam's" at once ceased their noisy carousals and paid close attention to him.

"Boys," began the old man, "I vhas in need of help. My daughter haf been sthole, unt fife hunter thousand tollars along vid' her, py dodt schoundrel Terry. I vant you to go oudt after him. I'll give fife thousand tollars to de first von who fetches Bonnie back, and fife more to the von who will bring back my money."

A crowd of men left the tables and gathered about Mr. Hollenbock, who told them, rather incoherently, as much of detail as he knew in regard to Theiss's escape with Bonnie and the loss of the sachel. The girl was well known and much respected by the rough citizens of Amacas, and this fact, with the reward of ten thousand dollars, which her father offered, caused a speedy and almost total clearance of the saloon, much to the proprietor's disgust.

"Who iz this young feller you're speakin' "

uv?" asked Jim, as Hollenbock seated himself with a sigh. "Where did you pick him up?"

"Terry brought him from the East mit him vhen he coome a day or two ago. I reckon they vhas in partnership in a scheme to rob me, though the young man vhas an hones' lookin' chap."

"An' you don't know where he's gone now or whether or not he's got the sachel?"

The old man shook his head sadly.

"I don't care so mooch aboutt'e money ash I do aboutt Bonnie," he said, stifling a kind of sob which arose in spite of his efforts to keep cool. "I'm afeard she's gone off mit der rascal of her own free will."

"Eloped?"

"Dodt vhas it, I guess. I thought she vhas too sensible for sooch nonsense, budt dis man Terry ish a goot-lookin' kind of chap, an' perhaps she's godt an idea she vhas in lofe mit him, ain'dt it?"

Jim could offer no consolation to the old man.

"I reckon she'll leave him if he don't treat her right," he said, shortly. "She ain't no slouch, Bonnie ain't."

Hollenbock arose and hobbled slowly outside, bewailing the ill-wind which ever blew Allan Theiss to Amacas.

The men whom he had started off in a chase after the cashier had already departed, some of them on horseback and others on foot. He had not much confidence in their ability to catch the man, and depended more on Bonnie herself than on the searchers. Still, he was thoroughly in earnest in offering the reward, for his daughter was about the only thing on earth, besides his wealth, which occupied space in his hardened old heart.

He walked to his deserted home and at once retired, leaving word with the faithful Bill to awake him if anything was discovered relating to the missing fortune or the missing girl.

Meanwhile Bert was plodding on toward Luke Guyson's cabin. He did not think that the cashier would discover the loss of the bonds before the next day, and it was scarcely probable that he would do so until he reached Junction City and opened the sachel. Dick's move in leaving the latter and only taking its contents was regarded by Bert as extremely wise and well worthy of his long-headed partner.

As he was thus musing, a sound of rapidly-advancing hoof-beats startled him and he hastened to crouch down behind some bushes and await the passing of the late riders. As they came in front of him he recognized the faces of a half-dozen men whom he had seen lounging around "Uncle Sam's," and rightly concluded that they had been sent out by Hollenbock to search for Theiss and Bonnie.

They were galloping straight on toward Luke's cabin, and evidently suspected the cashier's whereabouts. Bert, when they had passed by, sprung to his feet and ran after them, anxious to see the result of the night's adventure.

The Guyson stronghold was soon reached by the horsemen, and a few minutes later the reporter came up, panting like a race-horse, just in time to hear a gruff inquiry from their leader.

"Say, you Luke, cum out hyer!"

But Luke, whether or not he knew the mission of his late visitors, remained under cover and they shouted for him in vain. Colonel Clavin, the leader of the horsemen, regarded Guyson's silence as suspicious under the circumstances, and at once introduced more radical methods of bringing about an interview.

He rode close to the entrance in the picket fence and fired a score of shots into the air, yelling like a Comanche warrior as he did so.

These tactics, practiced for about fifteen minutes, had the desired effect.

A door was partially opened on the inside and Luke, in a very angry tone of voice, asked:

"See hyer, you blasted fools, what in blazes are you doin' now? I'll shoot a couple uv you ef you don't light out hyer pooty quick. Mebbe a man ain't got no right any more to sleep or—"

"That's all right," interrupted the colonel, coolly, filling the empty chambers of his revolver. "I reckon there hain't no call fur yo'r shootin'; we jest cum fur to make a leetle friendly call."

"Yo' did, eh?" came a growl from the inside. "Wa-al, then, you'd best go back whar you cum from, fur I hain't a-receivin' callers this time a-night."

"But we ar' a-goin' ter insist on it," continued Colonel Clavin. "We feel kinder sociable ter-night, an' we're comin' in ter see yo'. There hain't no use fur you ter object, bec' we "

mean biz, straight through, and we'd rather cum in through the door then shoot our way through the fence."

"You will, eh?" roared Luke, taking the latter part of the sentence as a threat. "Well, I reckon it'll be ther biggest job you ev' r tackled. I hain't a-goin' ter be imposed upon by no such durned fools ez you be, an' ther fu'st man thet shows hisself 'il git a bullet straight atween ther eyes—now you hear me taikin'!"

The colonel did not attempt to argue the matter with the angry man, but at once dismounted and directed his followers to do the same. They led their horses to the nearest trees, and then commenced the assault on Luke's stronghold. Under Clavin's direction, they used a narrow log of wood as a battering-ram with such good effect, that the door was soon forced from its hinges and thrown backward into the inclosure.

As it fell, a dozen bullets passed through the opening, and the assailants fell back in disorder. Their leader, however, was not discouraged by their first failure, and a second, and this time successful rush was made for the broken doorway.

Bullets flew thick and fast between the two parties; Luke, Theiss and even Molly using both hands in pulling triggers against the intruders. Bonnie, sitting up-stairs, heard the noise of battle, and at once divined its cause.

It was all over in a few moments. Colonel Clavin staggered back from the doorway, the last man of the attacking party to fall before the pistols of Luke Guyson and his friends.

The latter at once set about repairing the damages the assailants had done, while Theiss made hurried preparations for departure. He secured the sachel, and, after paying Luke well for his trouble, hastened away, forgetting, in his selfish desire to save his own skin, that Bonnie was dependent upon him.

Luke did not urge him to stay, and was, in fact, glad to see him go. His departure would permit of plausible lying as to the cause of the defense of his castle against the attack of the colonel and his men, and this was all Mr. Guyson cared for just then.

During the battle, Lord Carmly had remained an invisible but deeply-interested spectator of the whole thing. When it closed, he started to return to Doc Cody's cabin, but, remembering Bonnie, went back to find her and, if possible, escort her home.

As soon as Luke caught sight of the reporter, he growled:

"Did you send these fellers hyer?"

"I did not," replied Bert, truthfully. "I saw the fight just now, but I didn't know how it started, or what it was about."

"I believe you lie," returned the man, fiercely. "I'm in a nice fix now, ain't I? What'll become uv me when the people down ter the village hear of this?"

"I don't know," said Bert, coolly. "I certainly didn't send these men here, however. Where is Terry?"

"He just took the sachel and sneaked."

"With the girl?"

"No; she's up-stairs."

"Well, if he's gone, I suppose Bonnie might as well be taken back to her home," suggested Bert.

"I guess not. I've kinder got an idee that I'll keep thet gurl myself."

"You?"

"That's what I said, an' don't you go blabbin' ther fact uv my doin' so all over town, neither. Ef you do, I'll settle you mighty quick, d'ye hyer?"

The reporter was completely knocked out, but he turned away, muttering loud enough for Luke to hear:

"I guess I'll leave this country the first thing in the morning. I can't stand such shooting and other deviltry as this."

"That's right," responded the other, approvingly. "If you light out of this country tomorrow, you'll do the sensiblest thing you could do. This hain't a healthy place fur sech fellers."

Bert walked away in the darkness without replying, leaving the victor of the late battle nursing the wounded of the defeated party, while Colonel Clavin departed for Amacas to get medical assistance.

CHAPTER VII.

A PRISONER.

DETECTIVE DICK spent the night at Doc Cody's cabin, and in the morning awaited the return of Lord Carmly. But as the hours passed, and the reporter did not put in an appearance, Dick started out to search for him. He soon heard of the battle between Colonel Clavin's forces and Luke Guyson the night be-

fore, and knowing of Bert's proximity to the cabin, feared that something had befallen his partner. He secured the assistance of Doc Cody, who left the bedside of a couple of the wounded men, and the two set out together on the doctor's best horses for Luke's cabin.

"Bert isn't the kind of fellow to get into a muss of that kind unless he was forced to," said Dick. "If he had reached the place before the colonel's men, he was probably made to take a hand by Luke and Theiss. In that case he may have been shot, but I think it's more likely that they reached the cabin first."

"Then where do you suppose the young feller is now?" asked Doc. "D'ye think he'd stay at the house all night?"

"No, I shouldn't be surprised if he has undertaken to follow Theiss. The cashier must have lighted out as soon as he possibly could after the fight, and if Bert was able to, I know he'd follow him, even if he didn't have the bonds."

The two rode rapidly along, and reaching the vicinity of Luke's cabin, dismounted and tied their horses. Then they cautiously approached the scene of the late conflict.

Everything had been repaired. The gate was closed and fastened more firmly than ever in its old position. Only a thin line of blue smoke that curled in an uncertain way from the chimney-top, gave evidence of life.

"What shall we do, Doc?" asked Vinton, as the two halted for consultation. "Had one of us better go right up and knock on the door?"

Cody shook his head.

"Luke'll think we're after him instead of the other feller," he said, slowly. "I guess we'd best wait hyer fur a spell an' see what turns up. If Bert goes back to my cabin he'll wait thar fur us."

The two men lay down on a grassy spot and kept their eyes fastened on the entrance to Luke's stronghold all the morning. Toward noon their faithfulness was rewarded by a glimpse of Guyson himself.

The man opened the gate, and directly in front of it commenced to dig a hole. Several times he looked about him to see if any one was in the vicinity, but seeing nothing returned to work. In a short time he had a hole nearly five feet deep and about half as broad dug in the soft earth.

He looked at his work complacently for a moment, and then returned to the house.

"Waal, uv all things," muttered Doc Cody. "W'at on 'arth d'ye s'pose he's goin' ter do now?"

"I don't know; bury some one, I should judge," replied Dick.

"Must be goin' ter stand him on his head," said Doc, with a chuckle. "Here he cums back ag'in."

Luke came out of the doorway bearing under each arm a small, dark-colored keg. He again scrutinized the woods and bushes in the vicinity, but seeing nothing, set to work again. He first placed in the bottom of the hole a round metal cylinder, and in it set the two kegs. Then he leaped inside himself, and for nearly half an hour was busily engaged in arranging them. When he came out he dug an inch-deep ditch in the ground from the hole, under the gate in the fence to the entrance of the cabin on the inside.

In this he laid a small black cord and covered it with earth as far as the gate. Then he filled the hole he had dug, at first throwing in the loose dirt with great care so as not to disturb the mechanism of his work, and lastly covering it all over with sticks and leaves and clearing up all signs of the disturbance.

Having done so, he entered the inclosure, and closed and locked the gate.

"Gemminy Moses!" gasped Doc, springing to his feet. "Did you ever see such devilishness in yer born days?"

"I don't know," replied Dick. "I can't tell what he's been doing."

"You can't! Don't you know an infernal machine when you see one?"

The detective started back.

"Do you mean to say that Luke has built a mine in that hole?" he gasped.

Cody nodded.

"And is going to set it off in case he is attacked again?"

"I suppose so. It'll blow daylight through a hundred men ef they try to break in the gate, and he sets the durned thing off."

"But won't it hurt the cabin—blow that up too?" asked the reporter. "All that powder, I should think, would kill Luke as well as the others."

"Naw, in the way he's got it fixed. The thing only works up an' down, so ter speak. It'll fly

up'ards, but that round iron he put in fu'st will save him from bein' blown up."

Dick looked at Cody in horror.

"I didn't think such devilry existed!" he said.

"It don't—outside uv Colorady," responded Doc, grimly, leading the way back to where they had left their horses. "Thet Luke Guyson would do anything ter save his own skin. He's be'n mobbed half a dozen times, and so he built this fort out hyer fur perfection."

The two were startled by a pistol-shot from the direction of the cabin, and turned hastily around, springing behind a couple of trees as they did so.

Crack! Crack!

Two more reports rung out, and this time they caught sight of Lord Carmly standing on the roof of the cabin with a smoking revolver in one hand. Dick tried to push to his friend's assistance, but was held back by Cody.

"Stay hyer, you fool! Thet feller's all right, ez long ez he's got ther shooter."

Bert stood on the sloping roof of the cabin for several seconds, peering about below him. Then another shot was heard, and the young reporter threw his hands above his head, staggering forward, and fell to the ground within the inclosure.

For a moment the two witnesses to the tragedy stood still. Then Doc Cody spoke.

"Git onto a horse an' ride to Amacas," he said, hoarsely. "Bring a dozen uv ther best men you kin find thar. I'll watch hyer, an' shoot Luke ef he shows hisself."

Dick, wild with anxiety over his partner's injury, sprang into the saddle of the fleetest of the two horses and set out toward Amacas on a flying gallop. Cody remained behind, resting his cocked Winchester across a limb of a tree and leveled straight toward the entrance to Guyson's cabin.

For nearly half an hour he remained sitting perfectly still, awaiting an appearance of Luke or the return of Dick Vinton with the reinforcements. At the end of that time he lay in an inanimate heap upon the ground, while Luke Guyson stood above him with a heavy club in his hand. The man had left the cabin by climbing over the fence in the rear, and sneaking up behind the scout had dealt him a terrific blow on the head, knocking him senseless and almost lifeless.

Luke picked up the burly form of the unconscious man and carried it within the cabin, returning presently to secure the remaining horse.

We must now return to Bert for a few minutes, and tell of his unpleasant adventures with Luke Guyson on the preceding night. The latter, after permitting him to set out for Amacas, had thought better of his decision, and had run after him and brought him back.

"I reckon I'll keep you hyer fur a spell," he said, leading the way to his cabin. "Ef you git inter old Hollenbock's hands, there ain't no tellin' what you'll let him know about this leetle circus hyer ter-night."

Bert protested his willingness to keep his mouth shut in regard to the subject, and at once quit the town if necessary, but Luke evidently had some purpose in view for retaining him, and would not listen to his assurances. The reporter resolved to attempt the rescue of Bonnie, and if possible deliver her captor over into the hands of the law. He was fearful that the cashier would escape, although, knowing that the bonds were in Dick Vinton's possession, he thought it hardly probable that Theiss would be either able or willing to go far.

He was given the bounds of the cabin, but warned not to communicate in any way with his fellow-prisoner, Bonnie, who was confined in one of the largest rooms on the second floor. Mrs. Guyson, who had the young lady in charge, was an aged and somewhat decrepit woman who could offer but little resistance in case her prisoner attempted to escape.

And this is just what Bonnie determined to do.

She was armed with a revolver which she had brought from home, and resolved upon using it if occasion required.

Quite late the next forenoon, Bonnie heard Luke working in front of the house, and at once made preparations for taking French leave. She rapped loudly on the floor, a signal which never failed to bring Mrs. Guyson to the door, and presently the woman entered. Before she could say a word she had been thrown down and Bonnie was busily engaged in tying her hands and feet.

"Don't you scream," said the plucky young

lady, showing her revolver. "You and Luke have no rights to keep me here like this, and—Well, I declare!"

Bonnie stopped short and stared at Lord Carmly, who had just appeared in the doorway, with mingled dismay and astonishment.

"That's all right," Bert assured her. "I'm a prisoner here as well as yourself, and just came up to see where you were confined. Can I help you?"

The two bound and gagged Mrs. Guyson very effectually and then made ready to leave the house. A window in one end of the room opened toward the rear of the cabin, and Bert carefully raised this.

"It's about fifteen feet from here to the ground," he said, turning to Bonnie. "Can you jump it?"

She nodded.

"Isn't there a rope, or something, that you could lower me with?" she asked. "If there isn't, I'll jump, for I'd rather die than stay here any longer."

"I'm afraid not," said the reporter. "Luke has been very careful not to leave anything of that kind within reach."

He was about to assist Bonnie to the window ledge when a thought occurred to him.

"Why not get on the roof?"

"The roof! How would that help us?"

"It's slanting, you see, and this window is right near the peak. If we climb up on that we could crawl down to the edge and jump clear over the fence and outside of the inclosure. Wait until I go first."

Bonnie handed him her revolver.

"Take this," she said, "and use it if you have an opportunity."

The reporter put the weapon in the side pocket of his coat, and rising on the window-ledge, reached up and grasped with both hands the edge of the roof. Then he gave a mighty spring and landed on the top of the house with a loud thump. Luke, working in front, ran around and caught sight of the escaping prisoner just as he arose to his feet.

He sent a bullet whizzing toward him and received two in return. Then, taking more careful aim, he brought his prey tumbling to the ground.

Bonnie, terribly frightened, remained near the open window for a long time, fearing that her attempted escape, as well as that of her unfortunate companion, would be discovered. But Luke did not come up-stairs, or in any way give evidence of his presence, and so, after a time, Bonnie mustered up courage to follow Lord Carmly's example and perhaps meet his fate.

It was with great difficulty that she reached the roof in safety, and when she did so her tender hands were scratched and bleeding, and her arms were nearly broken with the strain. She looked into the yard, but Luke was not there, and then out toward the woods. In a few moments her captor came into view, bearing in his arms the unconscious form of Doc Cody.

Bonnie did not hesitate for a moment. She let herself slide to the edge of the roof and then boldly leaped into space, striking the ground on the other side with great but not fatal force. As soon as she was rested sufficiently, she set out on foot for Amacas.

The journey was a long and tiresome one to her, and it was late in the afternoon that, weary in mind and body, she reached Doc Cody's cabin and, entering, lay down on his couch. She did not want to see her father until she had sent some one out to Luke's cabin to rescue his two prisoners, and thought she would take a few moments' rest before doing so.

As she lay there, thinking over rather incoherently the incidents and accidents of the past few days, Dick Vinton entered.

"Why, Bonnie!" he cried. "How did you get here?"

"I escaped from Luke only a little while ago and came to get some men to go out there and save the lives of that poor young man and Doc Cody."

"Cody—do you mean to say he's been taken in by Luke Guyson?"

"Yes, he brought him in just as I escaped. Doc was unconscious, and had either been shot or knocked senseless with a club."

"And Bert—how is he?"

"I don't know. I saw him fall, but I can't say how badly he's injured. Why don't you get some one go to his rescue?"

"That's just what I have done, and twenty good men are on their way to Luke's cabin now."

Then he halted, turned pale, and almost fell to the floor as a thought struck him:

"The mine! I didn't warn the men about it

and Doc isn't there to keep them from walking right into the trap."

For a moment he stood still, and then sprung to the door.

"You wait here, Bonnie; I must ride on and try to catch these men before they reach the cabin. The bonds are in a box under the bed."

CHAPTER VIII.

A RIDE FOR LIFE.

A FEW minutes later Detective Dick was mounted on the fleetest horse in Buckeye Jim's stables, and running swiftly out toward Luke Guyson's cabin. He was not an expert horseman by any means, but managed to stick in the saddle as his steed rushed on, over the logs and stones that covered the road through the woods.

He was almost in sight of his destination when a loud explosion greeted his ears, and he knew in a moment that the mine had been fired. The report was immediately followed by a fusillade of pistol-shots, accompanied by loud shouts, and Dick reached the cabin just as the short but decisive battle was brought to a close.

In front of the entrance to the inclosure was a deep ragged hole and the explosion had torn up one entire side of the surrounding fence. As Dick dismounted, the men whom he had sent from Amacas, came out of the cabin, two of them carrying in their arms the struggling, cursing captive, Luke Guyson. Another hastened to bring into service a rope which he had thoughtfully brought along, and the entire party went further into the woods. The reporter knew that Luke's hours were numbered but he did not care to see the well-deserved fate administered to the outlaw, and so hastened into the cabin.

"Bert," he exclaimed, at sight of his partner lying on an improvised couch on the floor, "are you much hurt?"

"I'm afraid so, old man," answered Carmly. "Luke shot me in the shoulder and I broke my arm in falling from the roof of the cabin."

"And haven't you had anything done for the wounds?"

"Not until Doc came in. He's sort of fixed them up."

At that moment Cody himself entered. He looked considerably the worse for wear and a wide bandage stained with blood was wrapped around his head. He was glad to see Dick and said so.

"We've had pooty lively times aroun' hyer," he remarked, seating himself at Bert's side with some splints with which to set the broken limb. "But on ther whole I'm kinder glad uv it, fur it's rid us uv one 'er ther wu'st men thet ever disgraced Colorady."

"Why, is Luke dead?" asked Carmly.

"Wa-al, no, but he will be in a few minutes, I reckon," said Doc grimly. "One uv ther boys wuz sharp enough ter bring a rope."

A faint smile stole over the wounded man's face as he asked:

"Are they going to lynch him?"

"Sumthin' like thet. I'd like ter take a hand in it, but I'm afeard uv leavin' you."

Dick watched the rough but skillful work of Cody as he placed the splints on the broken arm and bandaged it in position.

"How did the mine explode?" he asked suddenly.

Doc nodded toward Bert.

"He set it off."

"Before the men got here?"

"Sart'in! Ef he hadn't, I reckon some uv them would be whar Luke's a-goin' by this time."

Presently the men from Amacas returned to the cabin.

"How's ther kid?" asked one of them stepping to Bert's side. "Is he goin' ter pull through?"

"Of course; ther' ain't nothin' ther matter with him, 'ceptin' ther broken arm. The shot don't amount to much," replied Doc. "I wish some uv you fellers would rig up a stretcher uv some kind ter carry him inter town on."

There were plenty of willing hands about, and a stout structure was soon put together with the aid of a shutter from the cabin, two long poles and some cushions which the trembling Molly produced. On this the form of Lord Carmly was laid and the men took turns in carrying it to Amacas and into Doc Cody's cabin. Here it was left in his charge and the men dispersed, very well satisfied with the result of the afternoon's work.

Bert was tucked up in bed, his wounds carefully dressed and he was advised to go to sleep

by the faithful Cody, before Doc would consent to have his own bruised head attended to.

"I s'pose it's some satisfaction to a man like Luke Guyson," he said, directing Dick in the preparation of some liniment, "to kick ther bucket in such a way ez this. He's b'en taken off'n ther 'arth arfter killin' three men an' woundin' a dozen. An' then it took all Amacas, pooty much, ter put him down. He wuzn't no slouch, Luke wuzn't."

Dick said nothing about his meeting with Bonnie. The others supposed she had gone directly from Guyson's cabin to her home, and Vinton, when he saw that she had not waited for him to return, imagined that the girl had repented of her folly and sought the protecting arms of her father. It was not until the next morning that he looked for the bonds which he had placed in Doc's strong box under the bed.

He found, when he did so, that they had been taken away.

"Bert," he said to his partner when he had made the discovery, "I'll have to leave you here in Doc's charge while I go out and see what I can do toward finding Theiss and the bonds."

"Why, I thought you had the bonds," exclaimed Carmly. "You surely hav'n't lost them again!"

"That's just it," said Dick. "I left them in a box beneath the bed here yesterday, and I just found out that they had been taken. Bonnie was the only person besides myself and Doc that knew that they were there."

"And you think that she took them?"

"It looks that way. I'll go up now and see the old man, and then start after Theiss, for we want him as badly as we do the bonds. Good-by; I'm sorry you can't help me finish this thing, but I reckon I'll be able to run the cashier down, and then we'll write up the story together. It will make a good one."

"I guess it will; good-by," responded Bert, reaching out his hand. The two shook, and then Dick left the cabin, feeling that he had progressed in his search but little, for although he had evidence enough to convict the man, he did not have either the cashier himself or the stolen goods. And then the wrong-doings of the Hollenbock Mining Company would have to be exposed to the public gaze, and the injured stockholders, especially Mrs. Rogers, shown how they had been cheated. All this Dick would have to undertake alone; but he did not flinch, and walked boldly out toward Caleb Hollenbock's residence to see Bonnie, and ask her squarely if she knew anything about the missing bonds.

The old man himself came to the door in response to the reporter's rap.

"Goot mornin'," he said, looking at the stranger with a trifle of suspicion. "V'ot you vant?"

"Mr. Hollenbock?" asked Dick.

"Yaas, dot vhas me."

"Is your daughter Bonnie in?"

"No, sir, she haf nodd peen in for two days," replied the old man. "Do you know anything about her?"

"I saw her yesterday, and she said she was coming home. Haven't you seen her since she went away with Theiss—I mean Mr. Terry?"

"No, sir, I haf nodd."

Detective Dick was deeply disappointed, and was compelled at once to connect the girl with the missing bonds.

He told the old man how he had met the girl in Doc Cody's cabin, where he had been stopping since shot while singing in the minstrel troupe.

"Ten you vhas dot man who got shot?"

"Yes."

"Unt you haf nodd seen anything uf ter sachel mit der money?"

Dick hesitated a moment, and then decided to tell the story of the assault on Luke's cabin, and the rescue and subsequent loss of the bonds. He did so, and when he concluded, the old man looked at him in amazement.

"Vell, vell," he exclaimed. "Dodd Terry vhas tellin' t'e truth, an' here I haf peen t'inkin' he vhas lyin'. Poor man, he haf got no money now, ain't id?"

"That's so," said Dick. "When he tries to deposit the contents of that sachel in a bank, I guess he'll get into trouble. But I must go now, and if I hear anything of your daughter's whereabouts, I will let you know at once."

"All right. I cannot see whatever bossesses dese young gurls nowadays to act so. T'ey haf no more sense t'an a pig."

The old man re-entered the house, and Dick turned and walked down the street toward

Buckeye Jim's saloon. He had no definite idea of his immediate action, but hoped to find about "Uncle Sam's" some clue to the bonds' disappearance. He could not help connecting them in some way with Allan Theiss, for he did not believe, that the girl alone, would take the money.

He walked into the saloon, and had just entered into conversation with the proprietor when a stranger entered. He was a young man of twenty or twenty-five, and had the appearance of having just stepped from a fashionable New York or London promenade. His loud, check suit, high hat, cane, and patent-leather shoes attracted the attention of the inmates of the saloon, who gathered about him, speedily, and began to ply him with questions as to his name, residence, and destination. To all of them he gave a haughty, mind-your-own-business kind of look, and walked up to the bar.

"I desire to registah here," he said. "Are you the proprietah?"

"Well, I reckon I am, about as much as enny one else," responded Buckeye Jim, playfully. "Hev you a card?"

The new-comer did not see the wink which Jim threw to the bystanders, and so drew from his pocket a bit of pasteboard, on which was engraved: "Mr. E. Barr Elwell, Private Detective, New York," and handed it Jim.

"That is my name, sir."

"All right," said Jim, "that goes. What kin I do for you?"

"I want a room for a few days. I am here on business of some importance, and I desire to remain *incognito* for the present."

"All right," said the proprietor of the Uncle Sam, with a chuckle. "You kin stay in ther house all ther time ef you want to. Have you enny valuables?"

"Eb? Valuables?"

"Yes; watches, diamonds or money."

"Why, yes, of course."

Jim stretched his hand across the bar.

"Give 'em hyer."

"What?"

"Hand over your valuables. I take charge uv 'em till you go away."

Mr. E. Barr Elwell backed away from the bar, clutching his watch-chain with both hands.

"Aw, weally you cawn't have my watch, you know," he said, plaintively. "You weally cawn't."

"But them's ther rules," said Jim, bringing into sight a huge horse-pistol. "We don't allow no funny business out hyer, sonny, an' if you want to fight, you mought ez well begin with me ez any one else."

"But I don't want to fight."

"I ain't much uv a man myself, but I reckon thet arfter you've done me up, some uv ther rest uv ther boys will give you a whack at them."

"I tell you I cawn't fight—I weally cawn't."

"Do you mean to insult me?" roared Jim, bringing the pistol down on the bar with a thump. "You ain't a-goin' to work off no bluff on me, d'y'e hear!"

The young man shivered, looked about him, and then brought from his pocket a Waterbury watch, and laid it upon the bar.

"I don't want to insult you," he protested. "I'm not used to the customs of this part of the country, but if you weally insist on having my watch, why, of course, you know—you've got it!"

A snicker broke from the crowd of assembled sports, and Dick laughed outright at the young man's discomfiture. But Buckeye Jim did not relax a muscle of his face as he gathered in the watch.

"Now," he said savagely, "take off your clothes."

"Sir! have you the audacity to request—"

"I don't request nothin'," said Jim. "I tell you to take off your clothes—an' to be spry about it, too. I'm a-runnin' this shanty, an' I ain't a-goin' ter hev no bandy-legged son uv a gun insult me with his boots on. Peel off your duds, afore I put a charge of buckshot inter yer carcass."

"But, weally, I—"

"Are you a-goin' ter undress or not?"

"I cawn't, weally—"

"One!" began Jim, ominously.

"But, I say—"

"Two!"

The young man hesitated no longer, but, hastily getting out of range of Luke's pistol-barrel, began to disrobe. He had removed his outer clothing, and would soon have been entirely undressed, had not the entertainment been

brought to a sudden and unexpected close by the entrance of no less a personage than Allan Theiss. He advanced toward Buckeye Jim, carrying in one hand, with as much care as if it contained the fortune it once had, the small black sachel.

"Well, Jim," he said, pleasantly, "what's the trouble?"

"Nothin'," muttered Jim, keeping his eye fastened on his victim. "Only this 'ere youngster come in here a few minutes ago and started in ter lick ther crowd. He ain't done it yet, but he's gittin' ready."

The cashier turned about and looked into the face of the much-persecuted young man. As he did so, he started back, and his right hand flew back to his hip-pocket.

"Elwell!" he cried. "You blanked fool, what are you doing here?"

"Nothing, sir," groaned Mr. Elwell. "Really, Mr. Theiss, I mean you no harm. I have met misfortunes at the hands of these brutes—"

"What's that?" roared Jim. "Jest say that over ag'in, and say it slow!"

"I—I have been rather roughly treated by these—these gentlemen, an' am not, therefore, prepared for entrance into good society, but I weally assure you—"

"You can't assure me anything," interrupted Theiss, roughly. "This is the second time I have caught you following me over the country, and it's going to be the last. Why don't you stay where you belong and attend to your own business, instead of bothering me like this?"

Mr. E. Barr Elwell did not reply, and a second later two pistol-shots rung out in the crowded room.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. E. BARR ELWELL, PRIVATE DETECTIVE.

ALLAN THEISS had made an open attempt at shooting the young man. But the first bullet flew wide of its mark, and when he was about to pull the trigger for the second time a sharp report rung out, and his revolver flew from his hand. Turning quickly, he saw Dick Vinton standing at the end of the bar, just replacing a smoking pistol.

"What do you mean by this?" cried Theiss, taking a pace in the reporter's direction. "What right have you to interfere in this thing, I want to know?"

"I didn't intend to let you murder the man, that's all," replied Dick, calmly.

"Who said I was going to murder him?" demanded the cashier, picking up his revolver. "And if I was, it didn't concern you."

"Perhaps not, but it concerned him," nodding toward the man, who was taking advantage of the situation and getting back into his clothes, "and he doesn't seem able to take care of himself. I sha'n't let you kill him while I'm here."

"You won't?"

"Not if I can help it."

Theiss looked the reporter over from head to foot before replying. Then he asked slowly:

"Do you know this fellow?"

Dick shook his head.

"Did you ever see him before to-day?"

"No."

"You don't know anything at all about him?"

"No."

"Then why did you want to keep me from settling this little dispute? I'm a gentleman, and I've got a right to shoot a man with whom I've got a standing grudge, without your blanked interference."

"I know, but this thing was too one-sided," responded the reporter, anxious to end the argument. "I don't want to see a man murdered in cold blood right before my eyes, and what is more, I won't."

"All right; then you and I must have this thing out right here and now."

Theiss carefully rested the sachel on the bar and cocked his revolver.

"Are you ready?" he asked, as Dick made no preparations for the impending conflict. "I want you to understand that I'm in earnest, and intend to shoot you for interfering with my little trouble just now."

The cold, matter-of-fact tone which the man used convinced the reporter of his sincerity, and he regretted exceedingly that circumstances should have involved him in a quarrel with the very man, of all men, whom he most wished to avoid. But he had plunged into the affair, and would be forced to go through it as well as possible. To that end he retreated a few paces, and with his hand loosely grasping the butt of his revolver in the side-pocket of his coat, stood facing the angry cashier.

The latter quickly raised his arm and fired

point blank at the reporter. The bullet struck the bar, chipped off a piece of wood, and glanced harmlessly through an open window. Dick covered the man with his revolver, anxious to avoid bloodshed if possible.

"Throw up your hands," he commanded. "And lay your revolver down, or I'll shoot."

Theiss had no intention of doing anything of the kind, and lowered his revolver to recock it.

The next instant he lay upon the floor, with Dick on top of him, and the crowd applauding, with shouts of approval, the reporter's brilliant and timely knock-out. The cashier struggled desperately, and swore until he choked, but Dick did not release his grip.

"Will you behave yourself if I let you up?" he asked, banging the man's head down on the floor. "Will you put up your pistol and leave this young man and myself alone?"

A string of curses preceded the cashier's denial, and Dick proceeded to drive a nail in the floor with Mr. Theiss's head. The crowd looked on with approval, and encouraged both participants with words of sympathy and advice. Buckeye Jim was especially interested, for a fight was, of all things, the best entertainment he could provide for his customers.

"Go it," he shouted, leaning far over the bar.

"You can't hurt the floor."

Theiss groaned, struggled and cursed until he was tired out, and then lay still.

"Just wait (bang) until I get up, you (bang) blanked young (bang, bang) idiot. I'll show you (bang) who's boss here."

Dick punctuated this and much more of the cashier's conversation by pounding Theiss's head against the floor. He was getting tired, and the under man showed no signs of giving in. Finally he resolved to furnish amusement for the spectators no longer, and called to Mr. E. Barr Elwell, who had by this time resumed his clothing.

"Here, you take your turn," he said, as the "private detective" approached. "Sit on him until he apologizes, if it takes all night."

The young man, anxious to redeem himself in the eyes of Buckeye Jim and his customers, threw himself upon the prostrate form of the cashier and commenced Dick's tactics, with some variations of his own that caused the on-lookers to howl with laughter.

"You will shoot me, eh?" he asked, jumping up and down on the defeated but not disheartened man. "Well, I guess not to-day. Maybe you think I'm going to stand all your abuse in silence, but you'll find pretty soon that I ain't. You've just about run to the end of your rope, and I've got a warrant in my pocket for your arrest for robbing the Cayuga Bank in New York City. I'll serve it now and take you back with me, you confounded—O ouch!"

The cashier with a mighty wrench threw the young man half-way across the room and bounded to his feet. There was blood in his eye, and as he drew from his pocket a long-bladed knife, the inmates of the room settled back against the walls.

Without saying a word he sprang toward Elwell, who was still spinning around on the floor from the force of the blow which Theiss had dealt him.

In another instant the detective would have been a dead man.

Detective Dick rushed forward to assist the unfortunate Mr. Elwell, but before he could reach him the door of the saloon was darkened by the form of a young man whom neither the detective nor the cashier had ever seen before. He could not have been more than twenty years of age, and dressed throughout in an untrimmed suit of buckskin. He wore a broad-brimmed felt hat on his head, and carried a repeating rifle in one hand.

At sight of Theiss with upraised knife rushing upon the defenseless detective, the new-comer threw the rifle to his shoulder and brought the barrel on a level with the cashier's head.

"Hol' on, thar!" he exclaimed, "Let up on that or I'll shoot! Whut d'ye mean by tryin' ter kill sech a little feller, anyway?"

For the second time that day Theiss was brought to a halt on the very point of committing a murder. He glared at the man who had dared to interfere, and tried to step out of range of the threatening rifle-barrel as he growled:

"What business is it of yours who I kill or who I don't kill? I'm old enough to attend to my own affairs, and would like to have you attend to yours."

"That's all right," replied the young man, good-humoredly. "I don't mean no offense, but as I come in to see this man, I had ter save his life or talk to a corpse. Jest ez soon ez I git through with him, I'll turn him over to you."

A growl from the cashier was the only response, as he took his sachel from the bar and walked out of the room. A sigh of relief escaped the lips of the detective on the floor. He arose and looked first at Dick and then at the young scout, as he said:

"That's what I call a narrow escape. Had it not been for my presence of mind, and the bravery of you gentlemen, I might have received great bodily injury. As it is, I am exceedingly thankful that you were able to render me this undoubted service."

With an elaborate bow, he handed to Dick a card, similar to that which he had tendered Buckeye Jim some time before, and shook hands effusively with the new-comer.

"My dear Robert," he exclaimed, dramatically, "I can't say how glad I am to see you. Together we will be able to clear this town of the biggest piece of rascality that ever was permitted to exist under—"

"Saut up," interrupted the other. "Do you want to give the whole thing away before the men are in town? You are the durndest fool I ever seen in my life. If all the detectives in the East are like you, I wouldn't give a copper for the whole lot."

This frank remark caused Mr. Elwell to temporarily subside, and Dick promptly introduced himself to the young scout.

"My name is Dick Vinton," he said, extending his hand, "and I came here a few days ago on business. I was just fortunate enough to save this young man's life, and I shall be pleased to make your acquaintance."

"I'm called Buckskin Bob," said the other, simply. "I'm here to help this young galoot on some business matters, but I don't know nothin' about him. Whar be you stayin'?"

"At Doc Cody's."

"Is that so? Why, thar's jest whar me an' this," indicating Mr. E. Barr Elwell, with a contemptuous wave of his hand, "wer' goin'."

"Then you can come with me," said Dick. "Doc is at home now, nursing a young man who was shot yesterday."

The three walked out of the saloon together, and on the way to Doc's cabin, the detective moralized on the great difference between life in New York City and Amacas. He took upon himself great credit for having come through the affair with Theiss alive, and was not disposed to regard his trouble with Buckeye Jim in a serious light.

"I'm a private detective on the New York City Secret Service staff at present, and am placed out here on important and responsible business," he said, proudly. "I have secured the services of Buckskin Robert, and will be pleased to use you if I can."

A snort of disgust escaped the scout, but he said nothing, and when they reached Cody's house, he walked in without ceremony.

"Hello, Doc," he said, cheerily. "How are you?"

"Well, Bob, whut brings you hver? I thought you wuz down in Arizony arfter ther Indians."

"I have been a scout for about six months, but I've come here on a little business matter which concerns you just at present. This here is a detective from New York," nodding toward Mr. Elwell, who was searching through his pockets for another card, "and he's kinder interested in it, too. Kin I talk business to you afore these people?"

Bob looked at Lord Carmly, resting on the couch in one end of the room, and then at Dick Vinton.

"Why, sart'in," replied Cody. "They'r all right."

"Well, then," began Buckskin Bob, closing the door and taking a seat, "there is a party of men on the way which will be here in a few days, to raise Cain with old Hollenbock an' his snide mining company."

"In what way?"

"They'r a-goin' to take charge of ther mine themselves. There's n. arly twenty of them, an' they've all bought stock in the old company and sold it when the concern tusted up. Some of 'em hez jest diskivered the fraud old man Hollenbock worked on them, and they are about as mad as they kin be, an' shoot straight. They air a-comin' hyer, an' it won't be healthy for any one to try to stop them from taking possession of the property which belonged to the stockholders of ther original company."

"But mebbe there ain't no law which'll allow them ter do it," interposed Cody. "Since then a new company hez been formed, an' new stock issued."

"I know thet," replied Bob, "an' so do ther men, but thet don't worry them none. They'r

a-goin' ter take the law in their own hands, and will only recognize the old stock. The new stuff won't be worth burnt powder after they strike ther town."

"Well, what hev I got ter do with it?" asked Cody. "I hain't interested in neither the old nor the new comp'ny, an' I don't keer what becomes uv old Hollenbock or his mine."

"I know, but you are workin' in it, an' when the boys come ter turn the men out there's sure ter be trouble. I cum ter warn you ter be on the right side uv ther fight, an' save yer own skin. There won't be no slouch of a racket between the two parties, I reckon, fur old man Hollenbock's got lots of money, and his men will stick to him through thick an' thin."

Doc arose and paced slowly up and down the limits of the cabin, as he answered:

"I don't keer partic'ly who runs ther mine, an' I reckon that ther people who put their money in it at first hez the most right to it, but I aint a goin' ter help neither side. Ef there's ter be some shootin' I'd like ter see it, but I sha'n't shoot myself."

"Then you won't help old Hollenbock?"

"Nary a help."

"Good boy! Now just keep your eyes open fur a few days, an' you'll see one of ther biggest circuses thet ever struck Boone county. Ther men will be here shortly, and you kin bet that they're prepared to take ther mine if anything short of the United States Army is back of it."

CHAPTER X.

PREPARING FOR THE ASSAULT.

DETECTIVE DICK listened to Buckskin Bob's story with deep interest. It not only settled beyond any reasonable doubt the fate of Mrs. Rogers's stock in the Hollenbock Mining Company, but also gave him an inkling as to Allan Theiss's whereabouts for the next few days. He knew that the old miner would be glad to make friends with the cashier, now that he had discovered that his daughter and not Theiss had stolen the five hundred thousand dollars. And that the cashier would be equally pleased to renew his intimacy with Mr. Hollenbock, the reporter had no doubt.

When the young scout had finished his story, Dick took him aside.

"You say," he said, "that all the stock in the old mining company that was purchased when it was first organized in 1871, will be recognized, and that no attention will be paid to the later issues?"

"That's just it," replied Buckskin Bob. "The men who are coming here to take charge of the mine are all those who were taken in by old Hollenbock in '71."

"But how will they know who were the original stockholders when Hollenbock has bought up or collected all the old shares and destroyed them?"

Bob drew from his pocket a piece of parchment, on which was a long row of names.

"Here's the list of every person who owned stock in the first comp'ny," he said, "an' also the amount. The men air a-goin' ter work this thing on ther square, an' each one will only claim jest what he originally owned. Ef some uv ther stock aint claimed at all it will be divided up amongst them."

The reporter ran his eye down the list until he came to this entry:

"Donald M. Rogers, New York City, \$100,000."

"That's it!" he exclaimed. "There is Rogers's stock now."

"Rogers—why, do you know him?"

"Not the old man, but his wife and daughter. They are living in poverty in New York City, and I came out here to see if anything could be done with the shares they owned in the Hollenbock Mining Company. This man in Buckeye Jim's, who tried to lay out your friend Elwell a little while ago, is named Allan Theiss, and he came to the Rogers family about a month ago, and took the certificates of stock, promising to collect their face value."

"And you followed him out hyer ter see that he played square?" asked Buckskin Bob, restraining Mr. Elwell, who was extremely desirous of outlining his important part in the affair.

"Yes," replied Dick, "and I found that Theiss, who called himself Andrew Terry out here, was the confidential agent of Andrew Hollenbock, and had traveled all over the country buying up the stocks for a song, or getting them into his possession on various pretexts."

"And more than that," said the detective, "he robbed a bank in New York City of five hundred thousand dollars. I have been em-

ployed on the case, and accidentally stumbled upon his connection with the mining company."

"I knew that as well," replied Dick, coolly. "My partner on the bed there and myself are also engaged on the case."

Mr. Elwell received this statement with consternation.

"But, my dear sir," he protested, "only regularly employed detectives can compete for the reward."

"What reward?" asked Dick.

"Why, didn't you know that twenty-five thousand dollars had been offered by the Cayuga Bank for Theiss's arrest and conviction?"

"No."

"And then why were you working on the case?"

"We're interested in it in other ways," said the reporter, "and are not after the reward."

The detective looked relieved.

"Because," he said, "after my having run him down in this way, it would scarcely be right for you to step in and claim the reward which I had rightfully earned."

A contemptuous sniff broke from Doc Cody.

"See hyer, you durned little ijit!" he roared.

"Do you see that man lying thar on the bed, with his arm broke an' a bullet in him? An' do you see ther broken head I've got?"

"Why-er—yes, of course," answered the detective, in a frightened tone of voice.

"Well, we've got them a-tryin' ter ketch this man Theiss. We hev been a-workin' on the case afore you left dresses, an' we hain't a-goin' ter allow no sech bandy-legged galoot ez you to step in an' spoil our fun—see?"

"Aw, weally, this isn't fair, you know. I'm a regularly employed detective, don't you know, and I have the first right to— Hold on, my dear sir, I'll go!"

Doc stepped toward the detective, and that worthy hastily retreated outside of the cabin.

"Robert!" he called, "be prepared to assist me at any moment. I shall now attempt to follow Mr. Theiss, and when I need your help I will call and let you know of it. Good-morning, gentlemen!"

The gentlemen did not return the salutation as Mr. Elwell walked away, swinging his cane with a gracefulness that he thought would impress the citizens of Amacas with some degree of his importance.

Luck favored him this time, however, for he had scarcely reached the main street before he caught sight of the cashier walking rapidly along, and still holding the sachel in one hand. The detective quickened his pace and followed after Mr. Theiss. The latter hastened along, outside of the village limits, and, reaching the woods, struck out in the direction of Luke Guyson's cabin. Mr. Elwell entertained all sorts of ideas as to the cashier's possible business in the wilderness, the most probable of which was that he was either going to hide, or had hid, the stolen bonds somewhere in the vicinity.

"I shall follow him," he said to himself, stumbling along through the woods, "until I get conclusive evidence of the whereabouts of the money. Then I shall serve the warrant, take him and the bonds back to the city, get a promotion and twenty five thousand dollars. That's the programme, as I see it, at present; and if those fellows with Robert dare to interfere with my plans, there will be trouble. I'm an authorized detective, and they have no right to meddle with my affairs."

Thus thinking, the detective hastened along after the cashier, every step carrying him deeper and deeper into the woods. At last, Theiss reached the cabin and entered, Elwell following close upon his heels, and halting on the outside of the picket fence. The detective waited there for a few minutes, and then entered and stood close to the open door of the cabin, listening to the voices of the men inside.

"What in the world have you been doing here, Luke?" asked Theiss. "The ground is all tore up, and you look as if you had been run through a fifty-horse power thrashing machine."

"I hev," said Luke, in a deep, guttural tone, which is only produced by a tightening of the cords of the throat. "I reckon I've hed a time uv it sence you went away."

"How's that? Did the men come back?"

"Not the same ones, but others. I hed fixed a couple er kegs uv powder in front of ther gate to set off, when ther fun commenced, an' thet's whut's tore up ther ground."

"And you blew up all Amacas, I suppose?"

"Nary a man. Thet young feller you brought here set ther durned thing off too soon and escaped with ther gal. Then ther men got in yere, grabbed me an' tied me fas'ter a tree out in ther woods. Ef Molly hadn't a' cum pooty soon I'd

'a' be'n a goner. A man ain't expected ter hang by his neck on a rope for mor'n twenty-four hours, I reckon."

"I should think not," said Theiss, sympathetically. "And so Bonnie got away?"

Luke nodded, for his organs of speech were in somewhat of a demoralized condition.

"And Carmly went back on you?"

Another nod.

"Well, that was too bad. What do you propose to do now—stay here?"

"Yes, I reckon so. I he'r people in Amacas think thet I am dead, an' I won't be disturbed. They know Molly lives 'ere and won't suspect nothin'."

"All right. I've made friends with old man Hollenbock again, and will try to get on the right side of his daughter who has mysteriously disappeared. She didn't go home from here, but went to Doc Cody's cabin, so her fathers says. If I can find her, I'll bring her h-ere at present. I want you to take charge of this sachel. It contains papers worth a good deal of money to me, but to no one else."

"All right," said Luke, "I'll take keer of it. It'll be safe 'ere, I reckon."

"I guess so. I must go back to town now, but will be here to see you at almost any time. Hollenbock is getting ready to start up his mine again, and I'm helpin' him. It's a paying concern, I can tell you. Good-by."

"So long," uttered Luke, with a hoarse growl, gently stroking his swollen neck. "Ther sachel 'll be ready fur you whenever you want it."

Theiss with a satisfied smile on his face walked out-doors, narrowly escaping a collision with E. Barr Elwell as he did so. The latter worthy went a little distance from the cabin and sat down, revolving in his mind a dozen schemes for getting possession of the stolen bonds, for he had no doubt but that they were contained in the sachel. The one which best suited him and which he finally selected in the assortment, he at once prepared to put in operation. He hung about in the vicinity until late in the afternoon and then boldly and rapidly walked into Luke Guyson's cabin.

"Are you the man he left the sachel with?" he began hurriedly.

"Who'r you talkin' about?" growled Luke.

"Theiss—I mean Terry, the man who left a sachel with papers here this morning."

"Well, what uv him?"

"He wants it."

"Ther sachel?"

"Yes, he just sent me after it from Mr. Hollenbock's."

Luke looked sharply at the young man as he limped to the corner closet and brought out the sachel.

"Who are you, anyhow?" he asked.

"I'm from New York and am working for Mr. Theiss—I mean Mr. Terry," replied the detective, not knowing which name the cashier had assumed. "And he sent me here for it. He wants to get something out of it and I will probably bring it back to-morrow morning."

Luke surrendered the sachel without further comment and the detective walked out, complimenting himself highly upon his adroitness in outwitting the desperado.

He consumed nearly three hours in getting back to Amacas and Doc Cody's cabin, but the journey was finally accomplished and he burst in upon the party just as they sat down to supper.

"I have it," he exclaimed, holding up the sachel. "This contains the five hundred thousand dollars which Allan Theiss stole from the bank in New York City."

He seated himself, and as Dick, Doc Cody and Buckskin Bob gathered about him, and Lord Carmly watched him with deep interest from the bed, opened the sachel.

A roar of laughter from the doctor and a disgusted snort from the scout accompanied the detective's mournful exclamation:

"They have played me for a sucker—there's nothing but a pair of boots here!"

After a moment of intense silence Dick asked:

"Where did you get it?"

"Out in the woods. I followed Theiss this morning out to the cabin of a man named Luke, where he had kept a girl confined. He left this sachel there saying that it contained papers worth a great deal of money to him. I thought of course he meant the bonds, and so I waited around for several hours and then went in and told Luke that Theiss had sent me after it. And here I am."

"You're a durned fule," was Doc's only comment, as he returned to the table. "Dick himself put them boots in thar."

"And do you suppose Theiss has carried that

sachel all this time without discovering what its contents were?" asked Bert. "It doesn't seem possible."

"I know it don't, but I guess that's about what he's done," replied Dick. "The question now is, where has Bonnie gone with the bonds? She certainly must have taken them when she left the cabin."

Dick searched the sachel, but nothing beyond the pair of boots was he able to find in it, and he was bound to accept the only available version of the affair—that the cashier had not discovered the change. The reporter was in great need of an assistant, but the injury which had befallen Lord Carmly would unfit him for duty inside of several weeks at least. Doc Cody would be forced to attend the injured man, and Dick did not feel like trusting Mr. E. Barr Elwell with any very responsible work. He turned therefore to Buckskin Bob, and told him his story, and the progress he had made in running down the absconding cashier, and straightening out the trouble of the Hollenbock Mining Company.

CHAPTER XI.

ALLAN THEISS ON DECK.

WHEN Allan Theiss left Luke Guyson's cabin, the evening of the first assault, he set out for Junction City, intending to cover the whole distance on foot. But he was enabled to obtain a ride for nearly the entire ten miles, reaching the village about midnight, and engaged a room at the Peerless Hotel.

The next morning he arose quite late, and after breakfast started out to find a suitable bank in which to deposit the bonds, which he supposed were still in the sachel.

Besides the latter he had in his pocket several thousand dollars in cash, and being something of a gambler, first sought a faro-table. The cashier was a mean man, but absolutely reckless and unprincipled. He would have readily committed murder, if in doing so he would be enabled to cover up the tracks of his theft; and to such men gambling is an attraction as well as an expensive pastime.

It did not take Theiss long to find a green-covered table, and once in front of it he began to play the bank for all it was worth, never betting below the limit. And, strange to say, he won. After several consecutive losses, he landed his money, recklessly, placing large bets all over the table, and collecting his winnings with the turn of every card. For three hours he played steadily, and then the game shut down. He had broken the bank, and when he went out cashed in over twenty thousand dollars in chips. This money, with what he already had, made a large roll of bills, in fact, several large rolls, which the cashier placed in the pockets of his clothes and returned to the hotel, resolving, now that he had won, never to play the game again.

Several of the bystanders had witnessed his good fortune, and among them were a couple of men who had for years been trying to make a fortune at the gaming-tables. They saw with envy his steady winnings, and when he was forced to quit at last, they followed him out into the street and to the hotel, each with an unspoken resolve in his mind.

Theiss was leisurely eating his dinner in the deserted dining-room of the Peerless House, congratulating himself on his great good luck and feeling a sort of satisfaction in the fact that he had been the means of knocking out at least one gambling-house, when he was suddenly seized from behind, thrown backward to the floor and a gag placed in his mouth.

"Don't struggle, or we'll knife you!" hoarsely whispered one of his assailants, as he ran his hands deftly through the cashier's pockets, abstracting therefrom not only all his winnings, but every cent of money he had about his clothes.

Theiss could feel the point of a knife-blade resting on the back of his neck, and knew well that to resist meant certain death.

"We'll leave you a couple of thousand," came the same hoarse whisper. "With your luck you ought to win a million before night. We're poor suckers who need the money more than you do. Good-by."

An instant later Theiss leaped to his feet, tore the gag from his mouth and rushed out of the room to the clerk's desk in front.

"I've been robbed!" he cried, excitedly. "Two men just held me up in the dining-room there, and took nearly thirty thousand dollars from me. Which way did they go?"

The clerk gave a hasty description of two men who had just left the hotel, and it

tallied exactly with that of the cashier's assailants.

"Where's a police station?" howled Theiss, grabbing his hat and the ever-present sachel. "Show me the way and I'll put officers on the track of the rascals."

The two hurried to the Police Headquarters, only a short distance away, and the entire force—three, including the chief—was soon at work, and everybody in the village knew that a bold robbery had been perpetrated on a respectable gentleman by the name of Andrew Terry. The proprietor of the Peerless Hotel was especially indignant that such an occurrence should have taken place in his old and respected house, and offered a large reward for the capture of the thieves.

Theiss was almost frantic with rage, and might have done something desperate had he not suddenly received a reminder that he himself was a fugitive from justice and a thief of no smaller caliber than those who had just robbed him. He almost ran into a young man on the streets of Junction City whom he recognized as a detective from New York City by the name of Elwell. The sight of him changed all the cashier's plans at once, and having communicated the robbery to the police, he invested some of his remaining money in a horse and started back to Amacas, intending to remain there until the detective went away.

His mind was somewhat confused with the adventures and incidents of the day, but he determined to get to Buckeye Jim's saloon before dark, if possible, and put up there for the night. In the morning he would go and see how Luke Guyson was coming out of his troubles, and then try to renew his friendship with Bonnie Hollenbock, and through her with the old gentleman.

How much of this programme he was able to carry out, the reader is already aware. After leaving the sachel with Luke Guyson, Theiss returned to Hollenbock's house. His adventure in the morning with the detective from New York City and his two rescuers did not suit him at all. He well knew that Elwell was in Amacas with a warrant for his arrest, and although he had great contempt for the young man himself, he feared that he would obtain assistance from some of the citizens and cause no end of trouble. Therefore, as a safeguard, he had deposited the sachel in the cabin in the woods, trusting to the lie he had told Luke in regard to its value, to prevent that worthy from absconding with it.

That night he ate supper with Mr. Hollenbock, and the two mapped out their future actions in regard to conducting the mine and the sale of what little stock there remained on their hands. The old gentleman was much pleased with the cashier's ability and business sagacity, and now that he had discovered his error in thinking him a thief, was even willing to have his daughter become Mrs. Terry.

"Budt ter funniest t'ing aboutt der hull business now," said Mr. Hollenbock, "vhas der fact doot Bonnie has godt der bonds, bofe mine unt yours."

Theiss opened his mouth to contradict the old gentleman, but at once shut it again.

"Yaw," continued Mr. Hollenbock. "She took der bonds from unter Doc Cody's bed, in his cabin down yere."

"When?" asked the cashier, in a surprised tone of voice. "How did they get there?"

"Vell, early dis mornin' a young feller come to der house oop, unt says he, 'Vhas you Meester Hollenbock? unt I says I vhas. T'en he vants to know vhas Bonnie in, unt I told him she vhasn't, unt hadn't peen in for some tays. He said his name vhas Vinton unt doot he hadt got shot on t'e stage uf der minstrel show oop at Buckeye Jim's the udder night. Hesai he vhas stopping at Doc Cody's cabin, unt Bonnie came there yesterday unt took t'e bonds from unter t'e bed away."

"From under the bed?" asked Theiss, whose brain was in a whirl. "Who put them there?"

"T'is young feller, Vinton."

"And how in blazes did he get them?"

"From Luke Guyson."

The cashier gazed at the old gentleman in utter amazement, and then leaped to his feet, grabbed his hat and started for the door.

"Coomer pack," cried Mr. Hollenbock. "V'at vhas t'e madder mit you, ain't id?"

"I—I don't understand, that's all," replied Theiss, sinking into a chair again. "I don't see how this young man could have got them from Luke anyway."

"Budt he says he didt. Aboutt a tozen men from ter village aroundt vent ofer to Luke's

cabin unt raised ter tuyful. T'ey hung him, burnt town his cabin and tore oop der whole place. T'is man Vinton vhas dere, I pelieve, unt he brought ter bonds ter Doc Cody's cabin unt hid them the bed unter. T'en Bonnie godt away from Luke unt came to Doc's place unt took ter papers away ag'in."

"But how in blazes did she know they were there? Where has she taken them? Who is this young fellow, anyway?" asked Theiss, pointedly. "I believe the whole story is a fake."

The old man shook his head doubtfully. "I don't know noddings about anyt'ings," he said. "T'e young feller seemed ter pe tell-in' der truth, unt I vhas— V'y, where ish you goin' now, don't id?"

The cashier hastened out of the room without replying. The conflicting stories in regard to two fortunes completely upset him, and as soon as Black Bill could get a horse saddled he started out toward Luke Guyson's cabin. He could not make head nor tail to the old gentleman's story, and was unable to connect Bonnie in any way with the bonds, when he had so confidently supposed that they were in Luke's possession in the sachel.

And why this young man Vinton should have interested himself in the case, or Bonnie should have gone to Doc Cody's cabin, he was unable to determine. And the reader may be sure that after his visit to Luke Guyson's cabin, his peace of mind was not materially increased.

Luke was surprised at seeing the cashier at so late an hour, and was himself on the point of retiring when Theiss abruptly entered.

"See here, Guyson," began the latter, at once. "Just let's see that sachel of mine a minute. I'm afraid there's been some funny work around here, and I want to see what it amounts to."

The other looked at Theiss in amazement and disgust.

"Molly," he groaned, "go an' git my gun."

"What's that for?" asked the cashier, suspiciously. "You don't want to shoot me, do you?"

"No, but I want to put some buckshot in myself. I'm an ijiut, a blasted ijiut," said Luke, mournfully. "I give thet sachel away not more'n an hour ago."

"What?"

The amount of surprise, anger and dismay crowded into that one small exclamation caused Luke to look nervously about him for a weapon of some sort.

"It's a fact," he muttered. "I thought it was all right."

"All right, you blanked lunatic! Didn't I tell you not to let any one touch it?" roared the cashier. "Who in blanked blazes did you give it to?"

"I dunno," replied Guyson, meekly. "A litle feller cum hyer this afternoon an' sed you had sent him fur it. He was dressed in dandy store clothes an' wore a high hat an'—"

"Elwell," groaned Theiss, falling back into a chair. "That fool detective from New York has got the bonds and I'm—I'm the sucker now."

He looked at Guyson in a feeble, doubtful way, and then arose.

"I'm going now," he said, steadying himself against the side of the door, "and I'll get that sachel back if I have to kill every man, woman and child in Amacas. If that dude comes around here again, you shoot him, and I'll stand the consequences."

Slowly and sadly the cashier rode back to town. There was murder in his heart, and it would not have been well for Mr. E. Barr Elwell had he been visible just then. Theiss could think of nothing to do but force the detective at the point of a pistol to surrender the sachel and its contents, and this he proposed to do at the earliest possible moment.

It was nearly midnight when he reached the Hollenbock stables and left the horse in Black Bill's charge. Then he walked toward Doc Cody's cabin to see that worthy and get from him some explanation of the unusual scenes which had been enacted in and near Amacas during the past few days.

A light shone hospitably through the single window in the cabin as the cashier cautiously approached it. Thinking that perhaps something might be gained by so doing, he looked in, and as he did so, saw something that made him start back and grip his revolver. The only visible occupant of the room was the detective, who sat near the table, in the center of which lay the black sachel—empty.

"I'll do it now," muttered Theiss, stealing

around to the front of the cabin. "I might as well settle this thing at once and forever. This fellow's blood must be on his own head—not mine. He had no business to follow me out here and interfere with my affairs like this, and if he goes home in a box, he will have only himself to lay it to. So here goes."

The cashier saw that his shooting apparatus was in working order, and then he walked boldly up and grasped the door-latch. It was unlocked, and the next instant he had swung it open and entered, revolver in hand.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ADVENTURE IN DOC CODY'S CABIN.

"THROW up your hands!"

Sharp and clear the command rung out, and the detective whirled around in his seat to confront the angry visage of Allan Theiss, and look straight down the barrel of the cashier's six-shooter. No second request was necessary, for the frightened man sunk on his knees to the floor, and glared wildly about the room.

"Where's the bonds?" asked Theiss, steadily. "What did you do with the papers that were in the sachel?"

The detective was almost paralyzed with fright, for he knew the character of the man who held the drop on him, and realized that only the slight pressure of a finger stood between him and eternity.

"They were not in the sachel," he said, after a moment's silence. "When I got it from the man out in the woods, it only contained a pair of boots. I thought you had put up a job of some kind on me."

Only a slight paling of the face betrayed the consternation this piece of news had wrought in the cashier. He believed what the detective had told him, but it did not change his purpose an iota. Carefully steadying the revolver on a line with the heart of the man crouching before him, Theiss paused a moment before pressing the trigger.

It is a difficult thing to commit a deliberate, intentional murder—to send a bullet into the throbbing heart of a man to whom life is sweet as death is bitter. And the full horror of the crime settled over the cashier's mind as he stood there, and for an instant paralyzed the muscles of his arm. But the feeling passed away as quickly as it came, and, shutting his eyes, he pulled the trigger.

The report sounded unusually loud in the narrow confines of the cabin, but as it rung out, the cashier was made conscious of the fact that he had missed his man. Not through any fault of his, nor of the detective in front of him, who for a moment had expected every breath to be his last, but through the timely intervention of a third person. Lord Carmly had been awakened from a sound sleep beneath the bed coverings by the voices, and when he realized the deadly peril of the young man, at once took measures to save his life.

On a chair beside the bed stood a large bottle filled with whisky, which Doc kept solely (!) for medical purposes. Bert grasped the neck of this and hurled it at Theiss, just as he fired. It was a poor shot, merely striking the point of the pistol, but it was successful in disconcerting his aim, and the next instant Bert had drawn from under his pillow a revolver, and aimed it at the cashier with his one good hand.

"Stand back," he cried, half raising himself in bed. "Lay down that pistol or I'll fire!"

A curse fell from Theiss's lips, and he took a step backward, lowering his revolver as he did so. The next instant he was gone, and the detective staggered to his feet, his face as pale as death, and beads of perspiration standing on his brow. All his false courage and self-esteem was forgotten in the realization of what Bert had done for him, and as he sunk into a chair he held out his hand.

"I'm a fool," he said, in a shaky kind of voice, "and I'll start back home to-morrow. This is the third time to-day that my life has been saved, and I sha'n't let Theiss get the drop on me again. I'm very much obliged for what you've done for me, and if I ever have an opportunity of returning the favor, you may be sure that I shall do it. There is no chance of my—"

But here the detective's words were cut short by the entrance of Doc Cody and his two friends, who had stepped over to Buckeye Jim's saloon a few minutes previous for a little refreshment. Dick had found time to tell his whole story to Buckskin Bob during the evening, and the young scout had at once pledged his word to help him down the cashier, and

straighten out the tangled affairs of the Hollenbock Mining Company.

"I'm kind of personally interested in this thing," said Bob. "My father, who owned one of the best ranches in this part of Colorado, sold out his entire place to get money to invest in with old Hollenbock. He's dead now, but I reckon I'm jest about capable of keepin' up ther claim."

"And you intend to join the party that is going to raid the mine?" asked the reporter.

"I do, for a fact. Old Mage Horner is a-goin' ter lead ther party, and there won't be no funny bizness whar he is. The boys will be here ter-morrer, I reckon, an' then jest you look out fur fun."

The prospects for "fun" of the kind Buckskin Bob spoke of were certainly excellent. If the men who were coming to contest Caleb Hollenbock's right to the mine were made of as good stuff as those who would defend it, there was a good outlook for the liveliest kind of a battle.

And so, in view of the impending conflict, the men paid little attention to Mr. Elwell's glowing account of his adventure with the cashier. To them, the life or death of the detective was of little consequence, and he was soon made aware of the fact by their total disregard of him and his advice.

After a short consultation, in which all took part, the men retired for the night. Owing to Bert's occupying the bed, the other four were compelled to sleep on the floor, and although it made pretty close quarters, managed to endure it until quite late the next morning. Doc himself was the first to arise, and the savory odor of frying bacon soon brought up the others. After breakfast, Buckskin Bob rode a little ways out of the village to meet the incoming party, while Dick prepared to pay his second visit to Caleb Hollenbock.

The prolonged absence of Bonnie was unaccountable, to say the least. She could not have taken the bonds with the intention of joining Theiss, for his having chased Elwell the night before, under the impression of his having the papers, precluded that theory; and if she had not intended to do so, it was certainly very strange that she had not gone directly home.

Thus mused Dick Vinton as he walked toward the Hollenbock stronghold. He did not care particularly to go there again, and was afraid that by so doing he would meet the cashier, but there seemed but one way of getting information about the missing girl in case she had returned, and that was to go directly to her father. And this the reporter did, knocking boldly on the front door when he reached the house.

"Vell, are you here again?" was the old miner's not very cordial greeting, when he caught sight of Dick. "V'at do you vant now, ain't id?"

"I came to see if your daughter had returned," replied the reporter, civilly. "Has she come back yet?"

"Vell, I dunno vhat pizness ed vhas of yours," said Mr. Hollenbock, suspiciously. "You vhas nodd interested in dose t'ings."

"No, except that I met your daughter, and feel interested in her welfare. If you don't care to tell me whether or not she has returned, that is your business, not mine."

The reporter was about to walk away, when the old man recalled him.

"See here, you," he said, seeming to think of something new regarding the case. "Coomer the house in for a few minutes. I vant to talk to you a leetle."

Dick hesitated for a moment, and then followed Hollenbock inside, and took a seat in the neatly-furnished parlor.

"Well," he said, "what do you want?"

"I vant you," answered the old gentleman, standing in front of the door. "I vant to know who you are, unt vhat you are a-doing here—see?"

Dick nodded, but did not reply.

"Id vhas cerdingly strange dodd you should sthay outd here shust for the fun of de t'ing, don't id? I pelieve you haf some pizness mit me, unt if you haf, I vant to know id."

"I told you who I was, and why I came here," said Dick, calmly. "The minstrel show—"

"Minstrel show noddings!" interrupted Hollenbock. "I don't belief you come here mit dodd minstrel show. I tink you lie, unt that you haf something vchich concerns me. Else v'y you coome here to see me?"

"I came to see your daughter. I told you how I met her out to Luke Guyson's cabin,

and was anxious to see how she had escaped, that's all. What business could I have with you?"

The old man shook his head doubtfully, and then, leaning out of the door, called:

"Terry—Meester Terry!"

The cashier replied from the landing on the upper story, and Hollenbock called him down. In a few minutes he entered the room, at first not noticing the reporter. When he did so, he started back, exclaiming:

"You here! What do you want, I'd like to know?"

"I came to see Mr. Hollenbock," answered Dick, coolly, "on business which doesn't concern you."

"Well, perhaps not, but I've a little score to settle with you," said Theiss savagely. "I don't know who you are or what your business is in Amacas, but I do know that you've been making yourself altogether too numerous about here of late. You interfered with my affairs up in the saloon yesterday, and now I'll take the liberty of interfering with yours. Mr. Hollenbock, I wish you would go outside and call a couple of the men in here. Now that we've got this young rascal we may as well keep him, for I believe he's up to something that isn't to our benefit."

The old man hobbled to the back door, and presently returned with a couple of stout men, who regarded the reporter with interest. Dick did not know what to make of this sudden turn of affairs. He had walked directly into the lion's mouth, and would be unable to defend himself against such odds.

"Get some rope," was the cashier's next command, and Hollenbock hastened after it. "Now tie this young man, and if he knows what is good for him he will submit peaceably."

But Dick evidently did not know what was good for him, for as the men advanced upon him he made a break for the door. One of his fists, sent straight out from the shoulder, struck Theiss square in the face and unfitted him for battle at the very start. The other landed on Black Bill's massive jaw and must have brought tears to the blinking eyes of that worthy.

"Hold him," cried Hollenbock from his position near the door. "Dond't mint his killin' you—that's right—now, altogether—down he goes!"

Dick fell to the floor with the two men upon him, and their combined weight crushed out the last spark of rebellion in him.

"Hold on," he cried. "Get off—you're crushing me."

One leg being free he began to use it vigorously upon the person of Black Bill, kicking him in the ribs with great force and precision.

"Get up," he groaned. "I'll die if you keep me here."

The fusillade of kicks, more than Dick's words, finally caused the men to shift their position, while Theiss slowly arose and reached for a rope.

"Hold him tight," he said, with a peculiar accent brought about by the loss of a couple of front teeth. "Don't let him move while I tie his hands and feet."

The job was finally accomplished, and the reporter lay bound and panting upon the floor while his assailants, somewhat the worse for the encounter, sat down to repair damages.

"He's a tough 'un," said Black Bill admiringly, testing with one hand the amount of injury that had been inflicted upon his spinal column by Dick's flying feet. "He fights with all four corners, he does."

And the other man, holding a scarlet handkerchief to his nose to stop the flow of blood, nodded his approval.

Theiss soon had his mouth in working order, although it still looked as though it had been struck by a flying ball club, and at once made preparations for the disposal of his prisoner. He and Black Bill bore the form of the reporter down-stairs and into a small room off the main cellar.

It was only about a dozen feet square, and was built of solid stones. There was no window, and the little light that found its way inside came straggling in through the slatted door. Had Dick's hands and feet been untied, he could not have escaped unaided, and so, being bound, there was absolutely no chance of his freeing himself.

For some time after his captors had departed, locking the door behind them, he lay still upon the cold, hard cellar floor. He could not move without hurting his wrists, which were tightly bound together behind him, and thus confined, he gave up all hope of immediate rescue.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FIGHT TO THE DEATH.

BUCKSKIN BOB left Doc Cody's cabin early in the forenoon and rode a short distance out of town to meet the incoming party, whose purpose it was to demolish Caleb Hollenbock's claim to the mine and set up one of their own. The scout found the men—twenty in number—encamped about three miles from Amacas, in a valley alongside of the road leading to Junction City. They had arrived there quite late the preceding night, and decided to await the morning before commencing operations.

When Buckskin Bob rode up they gave him a hearty welcome, and Major Horner, the leader of the party, questioned him as to his success with Doc Cody. After he had told them how the land lay in that direction, the men began to make preparations for a descent upon the mine. Nothing that would impede rapid riding and rapid shooting was taken along. All the baggage and camping utensils were left behind, and when the major drew up his line-of-battle, nothing was visible, but a row of Winchester repeating-rifles, behind which glittered a brace of navy pistols and a bowie-knife. Even Buckskin Bob shuddered as he saw the weapons, for he knew the character of the men who were to use them.

A few minutes later the party galloped off. The young scout rode by the side of Major Horner, explaining to him the number of men whom Caleb Hollenbock would be able to rally to his defense, and the general make-up of the field-of-battle. But these details did not interest the major. He was not enough of a general to take advantage of small things, and trusted entirely to the marksmanship and bravery of his followers.

"I know them boys," he said to the young scout, jerking his thumb over his shoulder, "and I know that every mother's son of 'em is either a-goin' ter git his claim from this mine or furnish material for a funeral."

They rode steadily onward, exchanging but few words, and occasionally examining the lock or trigger of their weapons to see that there would be no defects at the last moment. The mine was situated about half a mile back of Caleb Hollenbock's residence, and was reached by two roads, one leading directly to the house of its owner, and the other connecting with the road to Junction City. All about the mine were built small log houses, in which the employees lived. There was at the time a full force of men on, about thirty in all, who had just been summoned by their employer to commence work. Half of this number were on duty for twelve hours, and were then relieved by the other half.

When the followers of Major Horner were within a few hundred yards of the little settlement, they halted, and Buckskin Bob dismounted and went ahead to reconnoiter. Everything about the mine was working peaceably and almost silently. A large engine under a shed puffed away regularly, and the creaking of machinery to crush the quartz alone broke the stillness of the warm spring air. All this the young scout observed, and then returned.

"Dismount!" ordered the major. "Tie your horses in a bunch to this tree and cock your weapons."

The command was obeyed, and a minute later the whole party, with their rifles resting across the crook in their left arms and ready for instant use, walked cautiously toward the mine.

The bloodthirsty appearance of the crowd as they entered the inclosure, at once put to flight the few men visible. Old Hollenbock himself, who, after imprisoning Dick Vinton, had accompanied Black Bill and the cashier on a visit to the mine, caught sight of the party, and with his two friends, retreated into the nearest cabin.

A few minutes later the peaceful scene had become turned into a field of battle, and from all directions came yells, groans and curses, intermingled with the sharp crack of rifles and the steady reports of small-arms. The miners, although disturbed at their work, were not unarmed by any means, nor at all disposed to surrender to their assailants without a fight.

An hour later it was over, and the sun shone again upon the blood-stained ground with all its wonted brilliancy, and the air no longer trembled with the hoarse yells of the conflicting hosts, nor the sharp reports of fire-arms.

Major Horner and his men had won, but the gallant leader would never be able to take up his claim. Neither would a dozen others of his brave followers, who were now stretched life-

less upon the ground, in some instances with one of the enemy lying at their side. But they had conquered, and loss of life was not to be compared with the glorious victory they had won.

Thus thought the little party of survivors as they took formal possession of the adjacent property and made preparation for the disposal of the dead and wounded.

Buckskin Bob sat down on the doorstep of one of the cabins to get a moment's rest, and as he did so he caught sight of Caleb Hollenbock, lying upon the floor within. A tiny stream of blood trickled across his breast making a fantastic design upon his white waistcoat, as the young scout leaned over him.

"Hello, old man," he said, kneeling down. "Where did you come from?"

The eyes slowly opened, but for a moment the injured man could not speak. When he did so, his voice was almost inaudible.

"I was struck by a flying bullet—through the door there. Vere—vere ish Terry?"

"I don't know; are you much hurt?"

"I guess not; I'm sleepy, dodt's all. I don't feel mooch pain, but I vant Bonnie. Say, can I trust you? Who are you anyway?"

"My name is Bob—Buckskin Bob, and I will do anything for you that I can."

The old man tried to reach one hand down into his pocket, but failed, and then motioned to his companion.

"In there—dodt pocket—a key. Go to my house, on ter top floor—unlock—Bonnie—"

His voice failed him, but Bob understood what he meant to have said, and reached into his pocket and drew therefrom a small key. Then he went outside, mounted his horse, and set out for Hollenbock's house. The scout was sufficiently well acquainted with the nature and effect of gunshot-wounds to realize that the old miner was fatally injured. It would be necessary, therefore, that he ride rapidly if he was to bring Bonnie to her father before the end came. And this he did, covering the distance between the mine and the house in less than five minutes.

He dismounted, and opening the door, dashed up-stairs. The rooms on the top floor were all unlocked and in none of them could Bob find the missing girl. Then he sought down-stairs but without success, and finally became convinced that Hollenbock had misdirected him.

"It's very queer," he said to himself, as he mounted and started back toward the mine on a lively gallop. "Old Hollenbock certainly said that this key would unlock the door of a room on the top floor in which Bonnie was confined. But he must have made a mistake somehow, for she isn't there."

A few minutes later he knelt at the old man's side again; but this time no answer to his questions came from between the closed lips. Old Hollenbock was dead!

He lay at one end of a row of bodies—mute testimony of the fierceness of the morning's battle. All that could be done for the wounded had been attended to, and the survivors were holding a whispered conversation regarding the immediate disposal of the bodies. Buckskin Bob watched them for a moment and then rode slowly back to Amacas and to Doc Cody's cabin. The doctor himself was busily engaged among the wounded men, and only Carmly was at home. He greeted the scout with pleasure.

"I'm glad you got back," he said. "I wanted to ask you about the fight. How did it turn out?"

"Well, we won," replied Bob, dropping into a chair. "But there ain't many uv ther boys left, I reckon."

"Were many killed?"

"Pooty much all of Hollenbock's men went down, includin' himself, an' there's only six or eight of our party able to stand up."

"Is Hollenbock dead?" asked Bert. "Why, I thought he'd be the very last one to get into the fight."

Bob told of his adventure with the old miner, and his search after Bonnie.

"I guess I'll go over to the house again," he concluded. "Mebbe I didn't happen to strike the right room, although I looked everywhere. It may be that when Bonnie came home with the bonds she was locked up by her father. I reckon that ther old gentleman ain't none too good to keep the whole lot of papers ef he once got 'em inter his paws."

Bob left his horse at the cabin and walked over to the Hollenbock residence. On the outside everything was quiet, and the scout was just beginning to wonder where Allan Theiss had hid himself, when that worthy came rushing out of the door, and ran rapidly toward the street. Bob was about to follow him when

something very much like a groan came from within the house. He noticed that the cashier carried a small sachel in his hand, and thought perhaps that it contained the all-important bonds, but life was worth infinitely more than money, and so he turned and ran into the building.

The groan, which was apparently more of an effort to utter a cry than an expression of physical suffering, came from the parlor, and when it was repeated for the second time, the scout rushed in.

On the floor, tied hand and foot, and securely gagged, lay Bonnie Hollenbock, while doubled up in one corner of the room, with blood issuing from a wound in his head, rested the unconscious form of Dick Vinton.

"Well, by all that's wonderful!" gasped Buckskin Bob, drawing his knife and kneeling by the side of the girl. "How did all this come about? Where did you come from, and how did this young feller git hyer?"

As soon as her bonds were severed, Bonnie arose to her feet. She was very pale, but entirely uninjured, and at once brought out water and brandy to bring the reporter back to consciousness.

"How did he git hurt?" asked the scout, tenderly raising Dick's head while the girl bathed his pale temples. "He looks ez ef he'd been struck over ther head with a cyclone."

"Mr. Terry hit him with that rifle there," replied Bonnie, pointing to a blood-stained weapon lying on the floor, "and the poor fellow went down like a log. I wish you would go after the man; I can attend to Dick. Mr. Terry is responsible for this. He's a scoundrel and a thief, and has tried to commit murder. I shall tell my father what sort of a man he is when I see him, and I guess he won't dare show his face here again!"

A score of questions arose to Buckskin Bob's lips, and he was on the point of telling her of her father's death, when the thought of the escaping cashier sent him out of doors in great haste. He ran to Doc Cody's cabin and leaped into the saddle of his horse.

"I'll catch that man if I have to chase him to hell!" was his muttered soliloquy as he started off. "He's a scoundrel ten times worse than poor old Hollenbock, and if I don't bring him down, my name ain't Buckskin Bob, that's all."

A few minutes later the clatter of horse's hoofs died out down the road toward Junction City.

And as the scout started after the would-be murderer, Bonnie strove to bring back to life his unconscious victim. She was successful after awhile, and the reporter opened his eyes and gazed up into the pretty, anxious face of his nurse with a start of surprise.

"It's all right," she hastened to assure him. "The man has gone, and Buckskin Bob is after him. He just came here and released me. How do you feel?"

"I'm all right, I guess," replied the reporter, trying to collect his scattered wits. "But I guess I was hit pretty hard, wasn't I?"

"You were, indeed," said Bonnie. "When I saw you fall I thought he had surely broken your skull. Your head must ache terribly."

"It does, a little," admitted Dick, sitting up and winking hard to keep quiet the throbbing pain. "But I'll be all right in a few minutes. You say Buckskin Bob has gone in chase of Theiss?"

"Yes, he just left. I don't know why he came, but he seemed surprised to see you."

"Well, he called just in time," said the reporter, rising to his feet a little unsteadily. "We were neither of us resting very comfortably, I guess. Now, I'll go over to Doc Cody's cabin and get him to fix up my head, while you stay here and tell your father what has happened. As soon as I can find out anything about Theiss I will let you know of it."

Dick walked out-doors, and was somewhat refreshed by the cool air. He bid Bonnie good-by, and then hastened over to Doc's cabin, where a great but not unwelcome surprise awaited him.

CHAPTER XIV.

DICK'S RESCUE.

WHEN Dick Vinton left Bonnie in Doc Cody's cabin in charge of the bonds, he had no idea that she would become personally responsible for their being taken away. But the girl, desirous of undoing the wrong she had done in robbing her father, soon saw a way out of her difficulty. And that consisted in merely returning to their owners the papers which had become mixed by such a curious chain of circumstances.

She gathered them together, and placed those which belonged to her father in a package, separate from the ones which the cashier had brought. Then she left Doc's cabin, and walked home, where, after a stormy meeting with her father, she was locked in a room, up-stairs. Hollenbeck took charge of the bonds, both of his own as well as those belonging to the cashier, and placed them in his safe, down stairs, resolving to keep his daughter a close prisoner until Theiss went away.

Bonnie was at a loss to understand his motive for so doing, but was forced to accept the situation, and, for the next day, remained in her room. When Dick called, and was overpowered, at Theiss's orders, and carried down-stairs, all the girl's regard for parental authority was overthrown, and she at once resolved to tell her father what she knew of the cashier, and try to effect the release of the reporter.

And so, when the old gentleman accompanied Theiss and Black Bill to the mine, Bonnie broke the lock on her door and went in search of Dick. She found him lying in the room off the main cellar, where he had been left by his assailants only a short time before.

The girl called to him through the iron-barred door, and received in reply to her questions such disjointed and inarticulate words as the reporter could force through his gagged mouth.

"I'll try to break in the door," said Bonnie, grasping the rusted iron bars and shaking them vigorously. "I heard them struggle with you in the parlor, and I have come down to rescue you, if I can. Father and the men have gone out."

Dick listened to the welcome words of the brave girl, and then began to roll himself toward the door. After about five minutes of twisting and contorting he managed to bring his body alongside of the door and within easier reach of his would-be rescuer.

"Wait there a moment," said Bonnie, "I'll go up-stairs and get a knife and cut the ropes."

She returned almost immediately, and kneeling close to the door, thrust her arms through the bars, and, after a few moments' work, succeeded in severing the reporter's bonds. Dick arose with a sigh of relief, and stretched his arms and legs in a walk about his narrow cell.

"I didn't think I should be rescued so quickly," he said, "and especially by you. How long have you been in the house?"

"Ever since I left Doc Cody's cabin, the day before yesterday," answered Bonnie.

"And did you take the bonds?" asked Dick, anxiously.

Bonnie nodded, and then told the reporter of her having brought them to her father, and of his treatment.

"That's too bad," said Dick, sympathetically. "Theiss is a rascal of the worst kind, and just as soon as I get out of here I'll cut his career short, I can tell you. There's a warrant for his arrest in Amacas now, and a detective ready to serve it."

"But how are you going to get out?" asked Bonnie. "Father or Mr. Theiss has got the key to the door, and I'm not strong enough to break it down."

A hasty examination proved this statement to be correct. But almost immediately the quick mind of the reporter struck upon another idea, and a more favorable one.

"Get a pickaxe and a shovel," he said, "and I will dig under the door. The floor is of earth, you see, and will break up easily."

The girl hastened up-stairs, and after a time returned with several gardening implements. The two at once set to work on the hard ground, the reporter digging as he had never dug before, to excavate a hole to liberty, before his captors returned. And Bonnie, although unused to that sort of labor, realized the importance of haste, and worked with all her might on the outside of the prison entrance.

It was half an hour before the two holes ran together about a foot below the door, and Dick lay down on his stomach and wiggled through. Bonnie threw down her shovel and accompanied him up-stairs, where, after a moment's rest, Dick said:

"Have you any idea where the bonds are? If I could find them now I might take those which Theiss claims. It will go hard with us, I'm afraid, if he once got the papers in his possession again."

"I think they are in the safe," said Bonnie, going up to a square iron box, set in one corner of the room. "And if they are we can easily get them, for I know the combination which opens it."

She was right. In the center of the safe sat a small sachel, which on examination was found

to contain the bonds. Dick set it on the floor and knelt before it to separate the papers. As he did so a man, with a rifle resting over his shoulder, stole noiselessly behind him, and an instant later brought the heavy stock of the weapon down upon his skull with deadening force.

The reporter sunk to the floor without a murmur, and his assailant threw his rifle aside and seized the frightened girl. She tried to cry out, but he tied a gag about her mouth, and then bound her hand and foot.

Theiss, for the new-comer was none other than the cashier, who had left the mine and Hollenbeck at the commencement of the fight, and hastened to the old miner's house, now took up the sachel and ran out of the room and down the street. As he did so, Buckskin Bob came in and speedily released the two prisoners, as we have already seen.

Several hours passed while Bonnie remained in the house, awaiting her father's return. As darkness approached she began to fear that something had happened to him, and was on the point of walking to the mine, when one of her father's employees, a big, broad-shouldered fellow, called Jim Turner, entered. He took off his hat and bowed awkwardly.

"Good-evenin', Bonnie," he said, a nervous tremor in his usually gruff voice, "I hope to see you v'ell?"

"Yes, sir, Jim, quite well, thank you," answered the girl. "Have you seen anything of papa?"

Jim squirmed about in his chair, and looked about the room uneasily.

"No, not exactly—that is, I mean, I just left him," he finally blurted out. "He's dead; he wuz shot this mornin'."

"Dead—shot!" gasped Bonnie, reeling backward and grasping a chair-back for support. "Why—why, who said so?"

Her dazed mind could not grasp the man's full meaning, and she only half-realized the import of his words.

"I seen him," answered Jim, plunging into the disagreeable subject now that he had broken the ice. "There has been a fight over ter ther mine betwixt your father's men an' some outsiders. The other side cum out ahead and the old man went under. Ther boys are a-bringin' him here now an' I cum ahead, so as ter sorter break things easy, you understand."

The sight of the body, more than any words her friends could utter, brought upon the poor girl the full sense of her loss.

"Carry him up-stairs," she said in a hollow, unnatural voice. "And then bring a doctor."

"But he's dead," interposed Jim kindly. "A doctor wouldn't do him no good now."

Bonnie looked at him steadily for a moment and then, with a low moan sunk unconscious to the floor.

"She's fainted," said Jim, bending to raise the limp form. "I'll carry her up-stairs while one of you boys go out and get a woman to come in hyer and take care of her. This hez been a bad day fur ther Hollenbeck family."

The man addressed did as he was told, and presently one of the neighbors came in to perform the last services for the dead man, and nurse back to life his overwrought daughter.

And Dick, meanwhile, had gone straight from the Hollenbeck house to Doc Cody's cabin. He was very anxious now to use the power vested in Mr. E. Barr Elwell and his warrant for the cashier's arrest. He had no desire to claim the reward offered for his success in so doing, but wished to bring to a close the exciting adventures that had befallen the "invincibles" since they had been placed on Theiss's track.

He hastened to the bedside of his unfortunate partner, and found there, besides Doc Cody and the detective, no less a personage than Caleb Hollenbeck's coachman, Black Bill. The burly colored man was seated on the floor with his hands tied behind his back, and nervously eying a pistol in Doc's hands.

Dick's entrance caused quite a commotion. Bert sat up in bed, exclaiming:

"Why, here he is now. How in the world did you get loose, old man? This fellow here just said that he had helped tie you fast, and lock you up in the cellar of old Hollenbeck's house. Doc was just going to go out and look for you."

Bert talked rapidly, and soon explained that Doc had overheard something which Black Bill had told the cashier earlier in the day, and which had aroused his suspicions. As soon as possible, therefore, he had brought the colored man to his cabin to have him explain matters, and by the lavish display of fire-arms, and numerous bloodthirsty threats, had forced from him the confession of Dick's capture and im-

prisonment. Cody was just about to start for the Hollenbeck house when Dick came in.

"I'm glad you've kept this man here," said the reporter, nodding toward Doc's captive, "for it will be necessary for him to explain where Mr. Terry has gone, before we let him go."

Black Bill glared at Dick angrily.

"How'd yer know I know'd anythin' about it?" he growled. "Hez thet man be'n a-tellin' you anythin'?"

The reporter was surprised to see the man walk so readily into the trap. He merely shrugged his shoulders as he answered:

"That's none of your business. I've got evidence enough against you to send you to State Prison for life, and unless you are willing to tell me where this man Terry has gone, I shall use it."

"Is it about—about old man Hollenbeck?" asked Black Bill, hoarsely.

Dick nodded coolly, while the others paid rapt attention. The face of the captive turned ashen.

"I didn't do it, I didn't fo' a fac'," he said, earnestly. "It was Terry, it was, honest."

"I know that Terry shot him," said the reporter, who was now sure of his ground. "But you were interested in it; I know you were. And unless you tell me where he has gone, I shall turn you over into the hands of the law."

The colored man, believing that the reporter knew all about the part he had taken in the tragedy, now gave in and made a complete confession, which, reduced to readable language, was about as follows:

He had entered into a deliberate plot with the cashier to murder the old miner, and was to receive for his share of the work ten thousand dollars in cash. Before they had had time to arrange the details of the scheme, the attack was made on the mine, and furnished an excellent excuse for the carrying out of their murderous purpose. Theiss had fired the shot, Black Bill said, and without Hollenbeck's knowledge of the fact. The cashier had intended, by putting his benefactor out of the way, to coerce Bonnie into a marriage with him, and thereby come into possession of all of Hollenbeck's property.

Black Bill concluded his story, but doggedly declared that he knew absolutely nothing of the cashier's present whereabouts.

"Arfter he shot ther old man," said Bill, sullenly, but with an evident determination to tell the whole truth, "he seemed kind uv scart at what he'd done, an' lit out mighty quick. He sed he wuz a-goin' ter git a sachel, er sunthin', an' take it to a bank whar it 'ud be safe, an' then cum back arfter ther gurl. He wanted me ter keep my eyes open an' see how things turned out, an' help him git away with the gurl when the time cum. He was a-goin' ter marry her whether she wanted to or no. And thet's all I hed ter do with it."

This was the first intimation Dick had received of the murder, and a pang shot through his honest heart as he thought of Bonnie. He muttered to himself, but did not speak aloud, the sentiments which Buckskin Bill had expressed when he set out on the cashier's trail a little while before.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

THERE is only one road leading out of Amacas, and that runs almost on a straight line to Junction City, and there connects with a railroad to Denver and the East. Buckskin Bob knew this when he started after Allan Theiss, and therefore rode in the direction of Junction City at a rapid pace, intending to head off the escaping cashier.

Theiss had started on foot, but the young scout well knew that he could get a horse without difficulty, and so pressed on as rapidly as possible. When about half the distance had been covered Bob heard a pistol-shot in front of him and at once drew rein. He saw, as he did so, that he had almost run into the man he was pursuing. Theiss stood with his back to a tree near the side of the road, the sachel resting at his feet, and a revolver in either outstretched hand.

Before him, mounted on a powerful black horse, was the detective from New York, a rifle resting against his shoulder and the barrel on a line with the cashier's head. The two formed a striking tableau, as, for nearly a minute, neither moved. Then Theiss said something in so low a tone that the scout could not distinguish the words. But it was evidently a proposal for a parley, for both lowered their weapons at once, while the detective dismounted.

Buckskin Bob followed his example, tying his

horse to a convenient tree, and crawling forward on his hands and knees. The two men in the valley were having a rather exciting interview, which, to all appearances, was settling in favor of Mr. Elwell.

"I tell you, Mr. Theiss," said the New Yorker with emphasis, "that I've caught you, and you might as well give in. I won't consent to a division of the stolen money because I'm not up to such things just now."

The cashier shifted his position against the tree and half-raised his revolver.

"But, you idiot, don't I offer you a cool fifty thousand dollars to tear up that warrant and go about your business? If you don't, you are sure to run up against a bullet some time or another on account of your foolishness."

"And you are just about as likely to run up against one as I am," answered the detective cheerfully. "If you raise those revolvers of yours I shall fire this gun."

Theiss glared at the young man savagely, but did not dare to make any warlike demonstrations.

"You're a fool," he said abruptly. "I'm going on to Junction City and I shall shoot you if you try to stop me."

The cashier stooped and picked up the sachel with his left hand, keeping a cocked revolver in the other. Elwell swung the rifle to his shoulder, but as he did so Theiss had sprung upon him. With a bound like a tiger the cashier grasped the weapon from the detective's hands and swung it over his head. In another instant it would have scattered the young man's brains over the ground; but before he could bring it down, a rifle cracked upon the hill, and Theiss sunk to his knees on the grass.

He made a feeble attempt to regain his feet and then with a moan of pain, fell backward. Buckskin Bob, whose timely shot had saved the detective's life, now came rushing down the hill.

"Is he badly hurt?" he asked of Elwell, who was bending over the prostrate form, and trying to catch some almost inaudible words from the wounded man's lips. "I didn't mean to kill him."

"I guess he is," replied the detective. "The bullet struck him square in the temple, and—He's dead!"

A sigh escaped the lips of the dying man, and the form became limp in the arms of its slayer. Elwell's pale face and trembling hands showed how unused he was to such scenes, but to the young scout it formed a fitting climax to the day's adventures.

"I had to shoot," said Bob, "because he was just going to brain you with his rifle; but I didn't mean to kill him. I shot too hastily; but perhaps it's better so."

They laid the body by the roadside, and Bob volunteered to act as guard while the detective rode back to Amacas for help. It was dark when he returned, and nearly midnight when the little procession wended its way into the village and deposited its mournful burden by the side of the other corpse in the house of Caleb Hollenbock.

Having done so, Bob and Elwell walked to Doc Cody's cabin with the sachel and papers, and there handed in a report of the evening's adventure. It was received without great surprise by the reporters, who, since their visit to Amacas, had grown to regard everything as a matter of course, and due to the peculiar phases of Western life.

The rest of the work was soon completed, and Bert, Detective Dick's pard, being able to travel, the two, with Buckskin Bob and Mr. E. Barr Elwell as companions, set out for New York.

Detective Dick was successful in selling the stocks belonging to Mrs. Rogers for a good, round sum, and found it necessary to go back to Amacas several weeks afterward to see how his friends were getting along.

He discovered that the funeral of Caleb Hollenbock had been a most elaborate affair, with a thousand-dollar coffin and a five-thousand dollar monument above it. Bonnie had sold everything belonging to her father and was preparing to join some distant relatives in the East when Dick called.

Doc Cody had increased his practice since the departure of the invincibles, owing to a couple of uprisings at the Hollenbock Mine. At last, however, the rightful owners of the valuable property succeeded in establishing their right to it, although as Doc expressed it, "every ounce of gold dug out'n that mine hez be'n bought with an ounce in lead."

When Detective Dick returned after a week's visit, Bonnie accompanied him, and subsequent-

ly changed the name of Hollenbock to the more euphonious one of Vinton. They are living now in the upper part of New York City, together with Lord Carnly, who is still a bachelor, and who envies his brother reporter's good fortune in obtaining for a wife, the heroine of their exciting adventures in the West.

THE END.

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